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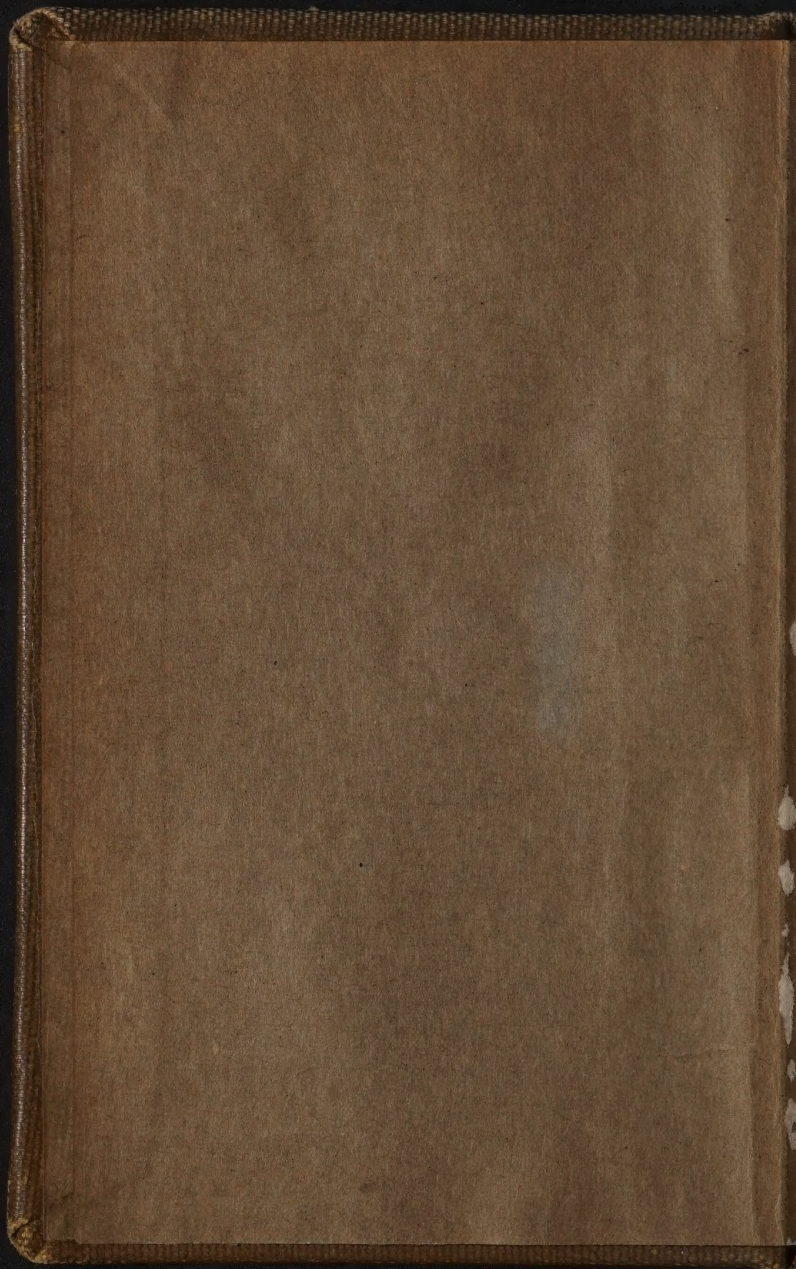
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ANNEX

ANNEX



THE
THLINKETS
OF 588
SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

BY
FRANCES KNAPP
AND
RHETA LOUISE CHILDE



CHICAGO
STONE AND KIMBALL
1896

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THE THLINKETS

OF

SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

CHAPTER I

IT used to be the fashion to begin a book on Alaska with an elaborate defence of the question: "Is Alaska worth owning?"

Small wonder, indeed, that the question was asked. Despite the fact that we paid for this great treasure-hold — as some arithmetical prodigy has figured out — at the rate of one and nineteen-twentieths of a cent per acre, and in the face of the intelligence that from the first the investment was a paying one, — the revenue from the seal islands alone representing an interest of more than four per cent on the purchase money, the United State Government has until lately preserved towards it an apathetic attitude well calculated to mislead the public as to the value of the acquisition. It was seventeen years before Congress allowed it even a show of a government.

During the first ten years of our occupancy Alaska was under military rule. By the terms of the treaty we were bound to protect the Russian residents, and, soon after the transfer was made, posts were established at Sitka, Kodiak, Wrangel, and Tongass. On the whole, the less said about those ten years the better. The soldiers were rather unruly, and the amount of wickedness they managed to instil into the minds of the natives, in a short space of time, does credit at least to their industry.

It was not very wise, however, for the authorities to withdraw the troops and substitute no form of civil government in 1877, as they actually did. The white inhabitants lived through a season of terror which lasted two years, and was relieved at last by the arrival of a *British* warship. A little later our naval authorities, on the urgent recommendation of the English captain, sent first, the steamer "Alaska," and afterwards the sailing ship "Jamestown," to keep peace. The "Adams" succeeded, remaining until 1884, when relieved by the "Pinta," which is still in Sitka harbor. The captains of all of these ships were necessarily men of much versatility. They were obliged to fill as many official positions as "Pooh-Bah." Their power was absolute, and be it recorded that there is no instance of that power ever having been abused.

In 1884, the first governor was appointed, and Alaska became a veritable member of the family.

Only since then has it ceased to be regarded as a remote region. Steamers began at once to run with more or less regularity, and the tide of summer travel set in that direction.

That Alaska is well worth visiting is another fact not requiring argument. Every year the number of tourists and the volume of enthusiasm increases, and the majority of returned visitors will be ready to testify that a round-trip ticket to Alaska means more unalloyed enjoyment than can be crowded into a similar two weeks' trip in this country or any other.

Thus we feel that if an apology or a defence of any description is needed in this chapter, it is for our temerity in adding to the steadily increasing literature on Alaska. We have this at least to say for our book: it is not written, as most of the others are, from a tourist standpoint. Not that we wish to decry the tourist; we expect him to buy our book, and we are prepared to treat him with the deference and respect which is his due.

Indeed, we admit that all of the country which can be seen from the deck of a steamer, or that can be gleaned from a few hours stop at the several ports, has been faithfully and delightfully

described. The matchless scenery along the way, the clear brilliancy of the atmosphere, the mild and genial climate, have become celebrated through these summer travellers. Charming souvenirs of Wrangel, Juneau, Chilkat, Killisnoo, and Sitka have found their way into print. In Sitka, the quaint little capital of the territory, the tourist always loves to linger amidst the historic relics of that past which is so rapidly becoming obliterated. The Greek church, with its green dome and double cross, is now the last remains of Russian magnificence. Its costly vestments and wealth of dim old paintings seem strangely out of place in the midst of their practical surroundings. Baranoff castle has fallen, after having defied the storms and winds of nearly a century. The spirit of the murdered princess will wander no more through its deserted chambers. She is avenged. The home where she lived and suffered lies in ashes on its proud eminence.

All this that is romantic and picturesque, together with a glimpse into the schools, churches, and missions, and even a cursory view of the native, comes within the scope of the tourist. Bright and attractive, it is necessarily somewhat superficial. The steamer landings are few and brief, the twenty-four hours at Sitka being the longest stop. Even there, the glamour of "steamer

day" is over everything. At the boom of the cannon the town wakes up. The sleepest of sleepy villages become the bustling, active metropolis. Flags wave ; public offices are thrown open, and officials, with extended hands, stand ready to do the honors.

Everybody in town is on exhibition, even to the Mission boys and girls, who, brushed and combed and scrubbed, in uniforms alike to a hair-ribbon, marshal themselves in prim order, and deliver the little set speeches drilled into them by their teachers between steamers.

The ranch people, as the inhabitants of the Indian village are called, so far as they are able, follow the general fixing-up custom. The far-famed Princess Thom sails down to the wharf to greet the steamer in her renowned costume, with yellow kerchief, pink waist, magenta shawl, white stockings, and purple parasol. Poor old men and women who all winter went bare-footed through the snow gathering driftwood, now promenade proudly in the shoes they have saved for the "company" occasion. Both sides of Lincoln Street are lined with natives with their wares spread out before them for sale.

It is not likely that the ordinary traveller suspects, as he looks into these grinning, upturned faces, that they belong to a people of marked in-

dividuality, having an unique organization and an interesting history. The eye of the artist will pass by the respectably clad and uniformed figures of the mission schools, to linger with delight on the blanketed forms crouching by the roadside. So the thoughtful, while they observe with interest and gratification the civilizing influence of the schools, will have that interest deepened and increased by knowing whence came these Indians, what their beliefs and traditions, and what the customs in which they were born and bred.

And it is to this purpose that our book is dedicated. We shall deal entirely with the Thlinkets, for with these alone the tourist comes in contact, unless he visits Kasa-an and Metlakahtla, where he has brief glimpses of the allied Haida and Tsimpsian.

Thlinket is the generic name applied to the ten or eleven tribes occupying the coast villages from Copper River to Cape Fox and the islands of the Alexandrian Archipelago. The name is variously spelled Thlinget, Klinget, Tlinket, Thlinket, and Thlinket. For ourselves we prefer the last.

The Thlinkets number about six thousand, and of course form only a small proportion of the native population of Alaska.

This population includes two distinct races of people classified as Oranians and Indians. The

Oranians, who are in much the greater number, include the tribes of Innuits, or Esquimaux, and Aleuts (with half-bloods of both), and occupy the coast line and outlying islands along the Arctic Ocean to Bering Strait, and thence southward to the Aleutian Islands.

Of the Indians, the Tinnehs hold the interior, and the Thlinkets and Haidas that small portion of the coast extending from the Copper River and Mount St. Elias southward.

There is a strong resemblance between all of these coast Indians as far south as Washington and Oregon, and the Chinook appellation Siwash, corruption of *Sauvage*, is rather indiscriminately applied by the white man. The Thlinkets do not understand the meaning of the term, but they resent bitterly being called by it. The younger generation is even becoming dissatisfied with Thlinket, preferring to style themselves Alaskans.

The eleven tribes are named and located as follows : —

THE UGALENZES — Copper River to Mt. St. Elias.

YAKUTATS — About Yakutat Bay.

CHILKATS — Lynn Canal.

HOONAHS — Cross Sound.

HOOTZNAHOOS — Chatham Straits.

TAKUS — Taku Inlet.

AUKS — Steven's Passage.

KAKES — About Frederick Sound.

SITKAS — Baranoff Island.

STICKEENS — Fort Wrangel.

TONGASS — Around Cape Fox.

The tourist sees only the larger villages where the people are directly under government and missionary influence. To study native life in its original simplicity, one needs must be a resident of Alaska, with opportunities for visiting the out-of-the-way villages off the steamer route altogether.

We have endeavored in these pages to conscientiously distinguish present and past customs and conditions. The reader will understand the frequent changes of tense.

Most of our material was the fruit of a three years' residence of one of us in the government house at Sitka ; whenever we have had occasion to refer to books, it has been, mainly, for verification of facts already known.

So far as possible we gathered information from the lips of the old men and women. The younger generation have so confused the traditions of their fathers and the teachings of the missions, that it is quite idle to appeal to them for a true version of a doubtful legend or belief. Our most valued source of information was a stooping, bleary-eyed, wizened-faced old relic, the oldest woman in the Sitka rancherie.

The first day of her saga-telling, she was established, out of respect for her great age, in the softest upholstered rocker in the house. She did her best to appear comfortable and at her ease, but it was evident that something was wrong.

The interpreter was appealed to by the anxious and embarrassed scribe. "What *does* she want? another cushion?"

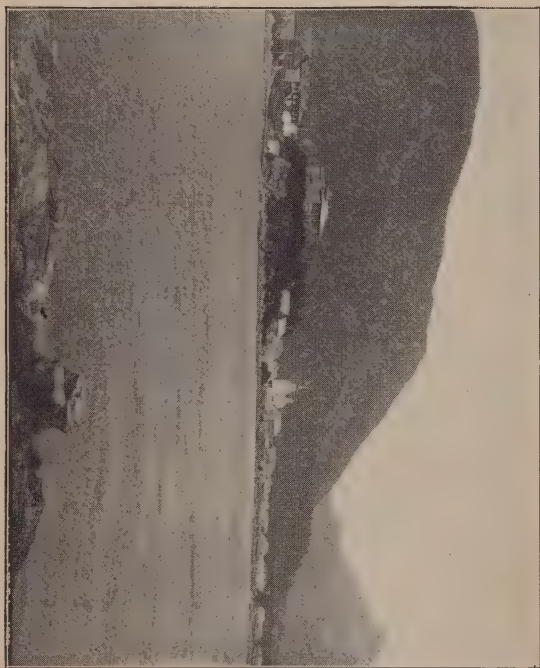
"She wants to lie on the floor," was the answer.

And sprawled at full length, native fashion, upon a squirrel rug, her chin resting on her withered hands, she told her weird tales.

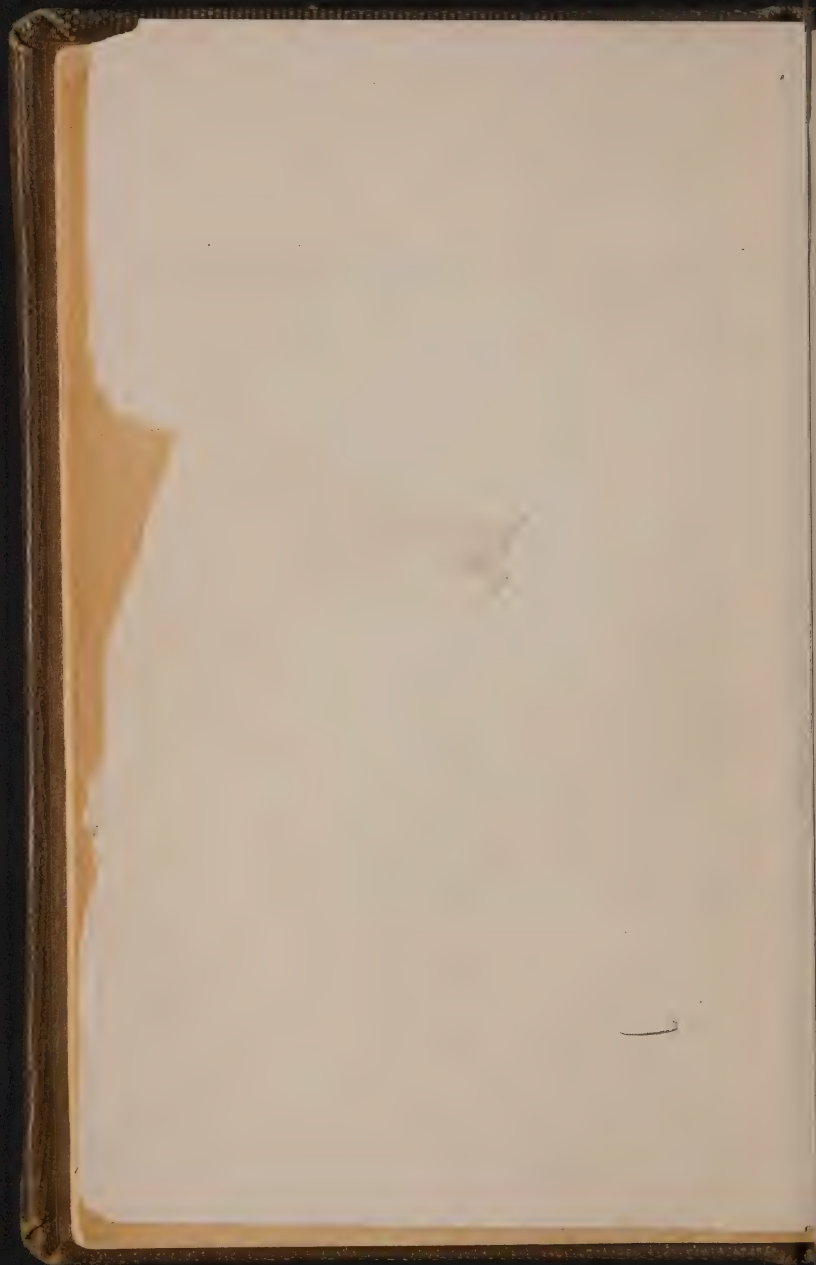
CHAPTER II

THE merely casual observer cannot fail to be struck with the wide difference in the appearance of the Indians of the northwestern coast and the nomadic tribes of the prairies. None of us who remember the picture in our first geography, in which Sir Isaac Newton typified "The Caucasian, or White Race," can have forgotten the high cheek-bones, aquiline nose, intellectual brow adorned with eagle's plumage, and general aristocratic bearing of "The American Indian, or Red Race." Clearly these Alaskans have no affinity with that proud figure. Scarcely more do they resemble the Indian of our later experience — he who slouches around western towns in government clothes, moccasins, and picturesquely folded blanket, soliciting small change on the strength of a greasy testimonial to the effect that "One Ear" is a good Indian and absent from the reservation by permission of the agent.

Various are the theories to account for this curious people. Judge Swan, of Port Townsend, Washington, who has probably given more time



BARANOFF CASTLE, SITKA



and intelligence to the study of certain groups than any other person, has written an interesting monograph to support the theory of an Aztec origin. It is known that emigration was greatly stimulated in Mexico by the arrival of the Spaniards, many boatloads of natives setting out for the north, and it is true that the Haida language contains not a few Aztec words and traces of many more. There are strong resemblances also in their monuments and carvings, and in some of their ceremonies and superstitions.

Other ethnologists mark the many points of resemblance to the northern New Zealanders. Captain Dixon, who explored the coast in 1787, for the King George Sound Company, was an enthusiastic champion of this theory. He noted a fortified house on one of the Queen Charlotte Island group, which "was built exactly on the plan of the hippah of the savages of New Zealand." He also observed that the famous raincloaks described in Chapter VI were identical with those worn in New Zealand. The jasper adze and other implements are of the same design in both countries, and the political organization very similar. It is interesting to note that the conditions of climate in New Zealand and in Southeastern Alaska are very much alike, which may account for many of these similarities.

Of course, the much put upon "Lost Tribes of Israel" have been discovered in Alaska as in most other parts of the world, though what affinity to Israel the natives of the territory bear is obscure, unless we except their astonishingly keen commercial instinct.

On the whole it is probable that the old story of the boy who described his canine companion as "part setter and the rest just plain dog," will apply to the case of the coast tribes. They are part something else and the rest just plain Indian. In our opinion that something else is Mongolian, Japanese, or Chinese.

The physical aspect of Southeastern Alaska is not unlike that of the Puget Sound country, Western Washington, and British Columbia. Dense forests of birch, alder, spruce, cedar, fir, hemlock, and white pine crowd down to high water line. So choked with under brush, gigantic ferns, and devil's club, are these forests, as to be utterly impassable save where trails have been laboriously cut through.

The coast is broken with many inlets; lofty mountains rise from the shores; the tides are high and swift, making navigation dangerous. All these grand and impressive features of landscape, with the raging seas, icebergs, and glaciers, if Mr. Buckle's theory of the influence of externals

is of any value whatever, cannot fail to have left their mark on the mental and moral characteristics of the native.

The climate is excessively moist, made so by the warmth of the great Japanese current meeting on these shores the cold air and sea of the Arctic North. The annual rainfall at Sitka is sixty to ninety-five inches, which you may compare, if you like, with New York's record of forty-five inches. The number of rainy days in the year ranges from one hundred and ninety to two hundred and eighty-five. The shortest winter days are less than five hours long, the summer nights being correspondingly short. The atmosphere in summer is noted for its exceptional clearness and brilliancy.

In this warm dampness, everything grows easily and lavishly. Vegetation is as rank as in tropical climes. Every kind of berry and small fruit is abundant, except such as require dryness and continued sunshine. Living is a very simple affair, or would be if the native were less regular in his habits of ignoring his opportunities.

Bears, wolves, foxes, and smaller animals are numerous. Wild fowl in great variety visit the shores and crowd the rocks and neighboring islands.

Probably the most interesting and important phase of life in Alaska is the totemic organization

of the tribes of the Southeast. An exhaustive study of totemism does not come within the scope of this book; but a brief explanation of its genesis and its present significance will not be out of place. A totem is defined by Frazer as "a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation. . . . The connection between a man and his totem is mutually beneficent; the totem protects the man, and the man shows his respect for the totem by not killing it, if it be an animal, and not gathering it, if it be a plant. As distinguished from a fetish, a totem is never an isolated individual, but always a class of objects, generally a species of animals or of plants. . . ."

Mr. Spencer believes totemism to have arisen from nature worship and ancestor worship. "The savages first named themselves after natural objects, and then, confusing the objects with their ancestors of the same names, revered them as they already revered their ancestors." Other authorities except from this and find a satisfactory explanation in the almost universal primitive belief in human descent from beasts and birds, and even inanimate objects. As we will point out in another chapter, it is our conviction that the two theories not only

are not antagonistic, but they practically mean the same thing.

As a system, religious and social, we find traces of it in many ancient nations: Egypt, surely; Greece, probably; Babylon, possibly. Frazer indeed regards it as proved for all Aryan peoples, if proved for any, "since it could scarcely have been developed by any one branch after the dispersion, and there is no evidence or probability that it ever was borrowed."

It exists to-day in Australia, in Senegambia, Ashantee, and other parts of Africa; among tribes of Siberia, Bengal, Formosa, Polynesia, Samoa, Fiji, and the Phillipines. It prevails vaguely in South America, in Panama, and among all of our own Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains.

But in Alaska it has been kept in such aboriginal simplicity as to offer rare opportunity for study to the ethnologist.

The Thlinkets divide in two general groups, or phratries, calling themselves the Raven and the Wolf (in some localities Eagle, and sometimes the Bear).

Both phratries are divided into clans, or sub-totems, each bearing a distinctive name. For example, under the Wolf, we have the Bear, Orca, Shark, Whale, Puffin, Porpoise, and so on. Under the Raven, a partial list includes the Frog, Goose,

Beaver, Owl, Sea Lion, Salmon, and Crow. These in turn subdivide into others with names referring to locality. So little is really known of the subject that we are obliged to speak of it with caution. Totems are not stationary objects. On the contrary, they are by their very nature in a constant state of motion. A man boasting an humble and obscure individual sub-totem distinguishes himself and becomes wealthy. As he rises in importance his totem and all who belong to it rise also. Its numbers increase, other totems are incorporated, and it may become a phratry or sub-phratry. Having reached equilibrium, dissolution sets in, and it gradually disappears.

Exogamy, or marriage outside the tribe, exists always in connection with a totemic organization. The relation is much closer between members of the same totem than between descendants of the same man and woman. In fact, a Thlinket has no blood-relations except his father and mother, sisters and brothers. He marries his father's sister, or his sister's child, or his own granddaughter, provided they belong to separate totems. But he may not marry the veriest stranger if they are both under one phratry. When a man marries, he takes his wife's totem; the children of the marriage also belong to the mother's family. Sometimes, however, a child is legally transferred

to the father's side of the house. In such an event, the infant is given for a brief period to the father's sister, the adoption being merely formal. A man, except in such cases, has no descendants save his own children. He is perfectly free to marry his grandchildren, and very often does.

The totem is regarded with superstitious respect, which feeling is as near reverence and worship as the Thlinket approaches. The emblem is carved, or painted, or woven on everything he possesses. But it has no especial religious significance. The famous totem-poles are simply genealogical and vaguely historical records. They are erected before houses, and are either commemorative, or merely a privilege and sign of the rank and importance of the occupants.

Usually the clan emblem of the head of the family is carved at the top of the column, and underneath it his wife's, and, of course, their children's. Family legends and traditions, inter-marriages, and so forth follow in order. It is hard to read the stories on these totem-poles, and by and by it will be impossible; for even now, it is only the older Indians who can understand them. The natives are all very loath to explain their mysteries to white people, and delight in misleading the curious.

The cost of erecting a totem-pole is considerable, two or three thousand dollars as they count values. To a savage an article is worth whatever he gives for it, thus reversing the methods of civilization, where things are worth as much as we can possibly get for them. A man erects a totem at an expense of one hundred dollars, and at the dedication ceremonies, called a potlatch, gives away six hundred blankets, worth one dollar and a half each ; his totem is estimated at one thousand dollars. Another erects a pole exactly like his neighbor's, expending the same amount of money on the construction, but gives away only blankets enough to have the total expenditure five hundred dollars ; his totem is accordingly worth one half as much as the other. The older the pole, the more valuable it becomes, the annually repeated feasts and potlatches adding to the original cost.

Rank is a matter of birth and wealth, or one might say of wealth alone, since good birth means simply inheritance of wealth. The head of that household whose possessions, numbers, and influence exceed others is called chief of the village. His authority is very dimly defined, and depends largely on his own personal force of character or mental superiority. There have been and are yet certain chiefs who rule as despotically as did Peter the Great. Occasionally some especially strong

or superior man has extended his power to other villages than his own, but this rarely occurs.

Besides these head chiefs there are lesser ones, heads of totems or masters of households. No particular deference is shown to any of them ; they have the place of honor in feasts and ceremonies, and in former times, when slavery prevailed, a certain degree of state was affected. At that time, every wealthy or influential man was a sort of a reigner or lord, and ruled his small kingdom with the same despotic absolutism as a baron of the Middle Ages. Much more powerful are the shamans, or medicine-men, but their position is religious rather than political. It often happens, however, that a shaman, by his influence over the superstitious, becomes rich and acquires chieftainship.

The Thlinkets have no councils or congresses occurring at set intervals. When occasion demands, the head men meet and, squatting in a circle, discuss the emergency which called them together. Speeches are made, pipes smoked, and a course of action decided upon without much formality.

CHAPTER III

FOR days one may sail through the narrow, tortuous channels of the long archipelago without seeing any sign of life, only the unknown, unbroken wilderness. Then a sudden bend of the shore brings him unexpectedly upon a tiny village, tucked away in the cosy shelter of some natural harbor.

These villages consist, for the most part, of two or three rows of lichen-covered, moss-grown frame houses, all facing the sea and following in a careless, straggling sort of a way the line of the beach. In their midst, a characteristic note, the far-famed totem-poles rear their proud crests against the sky. In front, the blue waters of the bay; on either side, the dark forests; and in the distance, the remote mountains, — a sombre background to the picture. And a gay, fantastic little picture it is, artless of composition, and delicious enough in color to inspire a painter.

Two considerations determine the location of a village, proximity to fishing banks, and a shelving

beach adapted to the launching of canoes. When not in use, these most cherished possessions of the Thlinket are drawn up on the shore and carefully covered with skins or blankets. The carved paddles rest inside the canoes, which are always kept ready for launching at a moment's notice.

The middle distance of the picture is occupied with a number of drying poles and frames covered with bright-colored strips of yukala (salmon), or delicately tinted slices of halibut and cod. Gay colored blankets abound in profusion, — blankets of every hue and description, red, green, brown, blue, yellow, and all the tints of the rainbow, thrown over canoes, strown along the ground, suspended by cords from platforms, or wound about the shoulders of idle ones basking in the sunshine.

A narrow, foot-worn, and hardened path winds along in front of the houses, with an occasional patch of grass on either side.

The typical house is a low, square, one-storied affair, built of rough-hewn cedar or spruce planks three and four inches thick, and roofed over with larger planks swung across heavy log beams. Two straight, vertical boards are fastened at the corners of the house in front, and covered over with elaborate totemic carvings. The entire front elevation of some of the more pretentious houses is thus ornamented. Aboriginal fashion demanded, in

lieu of a door, a circular opening, hung with a portière of bark or matting. There were no windows.

In the modern establishment, front doors creak on orthodox, hardware-store hinges ; and in Sitka the more ambitious habitations are built two stories high, and boast such startling innovations as bay windows, wooden floors, and cooking-stoves. The ancestral walls of Chief Kadishan at Wrangel, the very home of his fathers, has been thus ruthlessly remodelled, and treated to such a course of bay windows and other modern atrocities that one wonders that the spirits of his ancestors do not come back and perch in sorrowful indignation on the totem-poles erected to their memory and still left standing in front of the outraged mansion.

The native house, lavishly decorated on the exterior, is inside plain, dark, and decidedly untidy. The visitor crawls through the low door, and finds himself on a platform several feet wide, extending around the four sides of the room. A step down, of about three feet, brings him to a second ledge, or platform. Below this is the dirt floor. The fireplace occupies a space in the middle of the room, the smoke issuing from a square hole in the roof. This smoke-hole and the door are the only means of ventilation.

The several platforms are used for bedrooms,

and for the storing of trunks and chests, of which the well-to-do possess quite a number. Sometimes the upper platform is partitioned, or curtained off, into a series of small sleeping apartments, like the staterooms of a ship. The walls are black and grimy with the accumulated smoke and dirt of years, and from the heavy beams overhead swing drying fish and game, oil-bladders, and peltries, rank with greasy odors. Interspersed among these one will probably notice an odd pair of trousers, a ragged shirt, or an old slouch hat, the cast-off wearing apparel of some friendly "Boston Man" (the Chinook name for all Americans).

The furniture of the place is scanty, and consists mainly of blankets, feather-beds, chests, and boxes, and perhaps a rude frame for weaving. The beautiful horn spoons and dishes, so dearly held by the curio-seeker, lie caked with dirt and grease in a heap of cooking utensils, skins, and soiled clothing on the floor.

As many families occupy a house as can possibly be crowded into it. The larger the number of inhabitants, the greater the dignity and importance of the head of the establishment. Each family has its allotted space and its own corner of the common fireplace.

When a man builds, he calls upon his clansmen for assistance; and all who lend their aid in its

erection have a right to live in the house, if they so desire.

Thus under one roof are gathered all ages and sizes and conditions. Over the blazing fire one sees a withered old crone, who pushes back the gray hair from her almost sightless eyes as she stirs the seal meat boiling odoriferously in a greasy kettle. Around her frisk and frolic, with monkey delight, two little naked boys, possibly her great-grandchildren. They toss driftwood upon the fire, and greedily munch large slices of dried salmon.

Near the door another grizzled dame, as old and hoary as the first, busies herself dressing a skin. Her husband squats on the floor hard by, chopping into small pieces with his iron knife a square of seaweed, in preparation for the evening meal. A young hopeful of three summers lies flat on his stomach and watches operations, hardly knowing which interests him the more, the movements of his grandparents, or the salmon roe which he is gnawing from a bit of spruce bough.

In a corner two giggling young damsels bend over a half-finished basket. Large bunches of gay-colored straw lie at their feet.

An old gentleman, clothed in a single short and dilapidated garment, sits Turkish fashion near the fire, making jewelry. He holds a knife in his

right hand, and in his left a broad band of silver on which he is deftly tracing a conventionalized head of a raven.

In the midst of all this clamor, the master of the house sleeps peacefully and undisturbed in his place of honor on the further side of the fireplace, directly opposite the door. His wife sits by, chewing hard on his seal boots, that he may find them nice and soft when he awakes. Baby is stowed away in a corner with its mouth and nostrils stuffed with weed.

Outside, on the rickety steps, crouch a half-dozen men, women, and children, their knees on a level with their chins, their bodies wrapped in blankets, sunning themselves and gossiping contentedly.

If one can endure the smell of drying fish, green skins, and musty, sea-drenched blankets, or if he does not fear the pack of sore and snarling dogs swarming under foot, he will enjoy a stroll through the village, even if he lacks the courage to enter the houses.

Here, on a grassy knoll, a stalwart youth is engaged in skinning a deer. Its large eyes, glassy in death, are turned towards him appealingly and reproachfully. With careless unconcern he strips the skin from the body and tosses it aside. Whetting his knife, he plunges it into the flesh, and in a

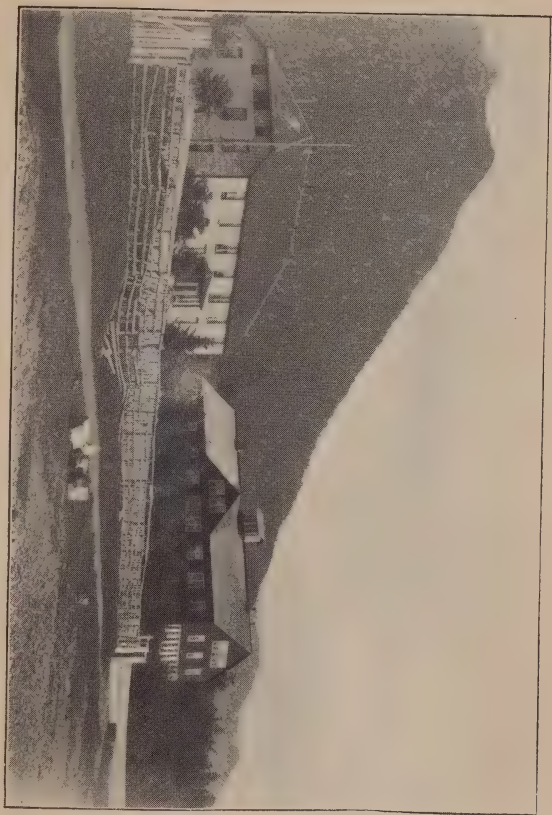
few minutes the deer, neatly cut in quarters, hangs from the drying pole.

Further on a gray-haired old chief performs the same offices for a huge grisly bear. He is careful to preserve the claws and the head, and, when all is done, he fastens the skin to the side of a house and falls back to admire it, nodding with infinite satisfaction, and grunting in pleased accents: "Ugh! Ugh!"

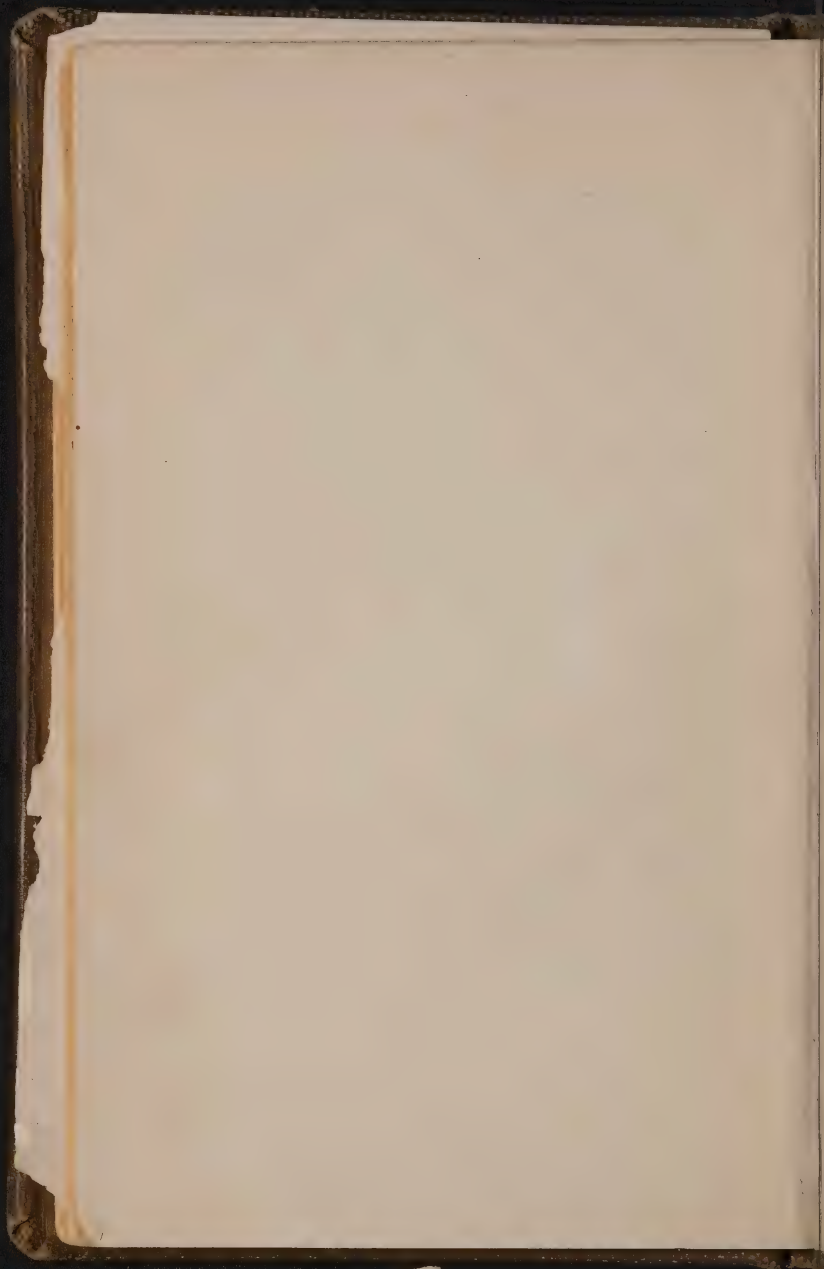
It is a subject for one of De Forrest Brush's poetic canvases.

Along the path, with slow and limping step, comes an old woman following a little girl, each bending under a load of driftwood. Both toe in to exaggeration, and it would be funny, were it not pathetic, to see them hobble along. The old woman is barefooted, and her clothing is scanty, but the withered arms are lavishly bedecked with silver bracelets, and her lower lip bulges out over her chin with a large labret. You may know that her social position is no mean one. The girl is young and rather comely. She too is more ornamented than clothed, but she belongs to the new generation, which has discarded the labret.

Down by the water a dozen merry little heathen climb the slippery sides of a great rock. There they go in their scanty, bright-colored shirts, jostling, pushing one another, scrambling for the top.



WRANGEL



Wherever they find a crack, or a projecting ledge, they cling to it with hands and teeth. Presently twenty-four brown little arms and legs go flying out from the rock like the spokes of a big wheel. Splash! splash! goes the salt sea-water in every direction, and shrieks of delight shrill from a group of little girls who stand near, over their knees in the water. Occasionally one of them catches a flying foot, which creates a bedlam of yells and laughing protests. Even the old woman crouching on the sand, washing her blankets, looks up to laugh and enjoy the fun.

This is a typical village scene. There is much that is picturesque about it, and much that is piteous and even revolting. Many of the natives are sufferers from hip-disease and other deforming maladies, and indeed it is an exception to meet a physically perfect man or woman. Exposure, improper food, and neglect of all laws of hygiene everywhere show their blighting effects. Lung and throat troubles are especially prevalent. What with the dampness and chill of the winter climate and the ill-ventilated houses, the only wonder is that so many escape death from consumption.

CHAPTER IV

THE location and character of the villages have changed materially during the past century. Formerly a town site was selected with a view to natural defences. Beside the regular villages, fortifications were thrown up in the immediate vicinity, to which the people resorted in times of special danger, and these sometimes became permanently occupied.

Lisiansky is authority for much that is known concerning those earlier days. The fort occupied by the Thlinkets in 1804, when Sitka, or New Archangel as it was then called, was recaptured, was built on the site held later by old Baranoff Castle, and was in the shape of an irregular polygon with its longest side parallel with the sea. It was protected by a breastwork two logs in thickness and about six feet high; around and above grew a mass of tangled brushwood. Two embrasures for cannon were placed on the side towards the sea, and two gates faced the forest. Within were fourteen large huts, or, as the natives had learned from the Russians to call



SITKA RANCH

them, "barabaras." From the provisions and number of household utensils which the Russians found, they estimated that there must have been at least eight hundred warriors in the enclosure.

If we are to believe the reports of these early voyagers, the Thlinkets were once a most warlike, aggressive people. The Russians found them cruel and vindictive, and brave only when sure they had the advantage of their enemies. When at a disadvantage, they feigned submission and bided an opportunity for revenge. Ambush and treachery were their modes of warfare; surprise by night and superior numbers, their reliance in attack.

In cases of sudden emergency, a council was called. Men and women were both admitted, and their voices heard impartially, though the advice of the older people usually carried the day. In preparing for war, it was the custom of the men to besmear their faces with paint, to powder their heads with crimson ochre, and to mat their hair with eagle's down. Captain Cleveland, in command of the "Caroline" in 1799, thus describes a party of hostile Thlinkets encamped on the shores of Sitka Sound:—

"A more hideous set of beings in the form of men and women I had never before seen. The

fantastic manner in which the faces of many of the men were painted, was probably intended to give them a ferocious appearance; and some groups looked really as if they had escaped from the dominions of Satan himself. One had a perpendicular line dividing his face, one side of which was painted red, the other black, with the hair daubed with grease and red ochre and filled with the down of birds. Another had the face divided with a horizontal line in the middle and painted black and white. The visage of the third was painted in checkers."

When war was to be waged at a distance, the big war canoes were launched and loaded with food, ammunition, and armor, each canoe carrying beside from thirty to forty warriors. It was usual for an old woman of rank to sit in the stern of the canoe and steer, for even in warfare equality of the sexes was maintained. Report says that the women were often leaders in battle, and it is certain that they were the more vindictive and revengeful.

In an encounter at sea, the assailants paused and put on their armor before advancing. The boats were turned slightly so that the gunwales intervened between them and their enemies. Each person encased himself in a wooden or leather cuirass. Outside of this he wore a kind of jacket,

made of thin laths bound together with sinews too closely to admit the arrows, but still quite flexible. His face and head were protected by a mask and helmet with carved visor.

Thlinket arms consisted principally of bow and arrows, spear, club, and dagger. Arrow-heads were originally tipped with shell, bone, jade, or copper; later with iron, when the Indians learned from the Russians to use this metal.

The spear was a simple, wooden pole, sharpened at the end or pointed with copper, and later with iron. It was hurled from a shaft held in the hand.

In a hand-to-hand encounter, the warrior relied mainly upon his dagger, which hung from his waist in a buckskin or leather case. A leather thong was fastened to it and wound about his wrist. Only in the clutches of death would he loose his hold of this dagger. It was a peculiar affair, short and one bladed, with ordinarily four edges, something like a bowie-knife, somewhat dull, but in the grasp of an infuriated savage a deadly weapon.

In war manœuvres the natives were more than a match for their European foes. On one occasion, with the hope of enticing Captain Cleveland's men ashore, one of them dressed himself in a bearskin and imitated a bear strolling along the

beach. So clever was the ruse, and so well carried out, that Captain Cleveland was completely deceived and ordered a boat lowered in pursuit. Fortunately one of the party lying in ambush disclosed himself, and the massacre was prevented.

X Khlebnikoff, Baranoff's biographer, tells the story of the Russian massacre in 1802. The opportunity was seized when the fort was quite deserted. A few men had gone to fish, others to look after the nets, and the women to the woods to pick berries. Only fifteen men remained in the garrison. Suddenly the Thlinkets emerged noiselessly from the shelter of the forest, armed with guns, spears, and daggers. Their faces were hideously besmeared with paint, or covered with masks representing heads of ferocious beasts with rows of gleaming teeth. A terrific uproar ensued, each man advancing shrieking and screaming in imitation of the animal whose mask he wore. In their victory they showed no mercy. They scalped and maimed their prisoners with true savage cruelty. They pierced them with their lances, dragged them about, all bleeding and torn, and then when finally their fiendish love of torture was satisfied, slowly cut off their heads, amid curses and foul abuse.

This practice of beheading was universal. Sometimes the heads were borne away as ghastly tro-

phies, or to prevent recognition of the dead by their friends.

According to Wrangel and Laplace, the bodies of those killed in battle were sometimes devoured, in the belief that their bravery entered the partaker.

Nor was inhumanity confined to the treatment of enemies. Sitka was recaptured by Baranoff and Lisiansky in 1804. After a few sharp skirmishes, the Indians agreed to abandon their stronghold, and gave the signal of their consent on the evening of the 6th of September. All night long a strange, weird chant was wafted over the waters. At daybreak, this chant was given a terrible significance. Not a sound was to be heard; not a form to be seen. The natives had fled to the mountains, leaving behind them in the deserted fort only the bodies of their dead babies, slain that their cries might not betray the flight.

An old Sitka pioneer, who has a native wife and lives in the most intimate relations with her people, insists that the old men and women of the ranch feel as bitterly as ever toward the white usurpers, and that, if opportunity should occur, the massacres recorded in Russian annals would be repeated. He remembers so vividly his own hairbreadth escapes that he can not believe a really radical change has taken place in Thlinket character.

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Since the occupancy of Alaska by United States troops, and the forcible suppression of slavery, Indian wars are virtually ended. Now and then comes a rumor of trouble from the Kake country, or some other unprotected section of the territory; but once the little "Pinta" appears upon the scene, the threatened insubordination is ended.

The feuds between tribes and totems, and the petty warfare so continually waged, generally arose from gambling quarrels, refusals to pay indemnity, or from fancied slights upon tribal honor.

The Thlinket is supremely self-conscious. He will face death, but not disgrace. The deepest insult you can offer him is to make him ridiculous in the eyes of his people. His ideas of what constitute honor and dishonor are very singular.

A child misses her footing, falls and scratches her face. She and her family are eternally disgraced unless her father gives a big feast and makes the scars honorable by paying for them.

Two men are angry with each other. One vents his anger and shows his contempt by going down to the beach and striking out a large piece from the side of his own canoe. The enemy sees and understands, and in a rage knocks out a larger piece from *his* canoe. They glare at one another and their faces are pale with passion, but they only destroy their own property. The one who

succeeds in being most destructive, goes away happy, his superiority proved, and his dignity asserted.

Private engagements or duels have always been favorite methods of settling family and tribal as well as individual differences. Such were believed to be under the special auspices of Kanukh, the god of war. The antagonists formed in two lines facing one another, and holding with their left hands to the long rope extending the length of the line. The right hand wielded the dagger. As one dropped the rope, he was out of the contest, which continued until one side or the other was vanquished. The hand which had held the dagger was considered unclean, literally; as well as figuratively, and for several days after the contest all food was taken from the left hand.

In duels, the combatants protected themselves with armor. Masks and helmets were worn on the heads, leather shirts and wooden shields on the bodies. Each man carried a dagger, and stepped forth to the combat cheered by the cries and songs of his friends, who looked on with the same refined emotions felt by the Americans of to-day when they have paid admission to a Corbett-Mitchell prize-fight.

A white feather plucked from an eagle-skin was the token of peace. A tuft of these fastened to

the mast-head of an approaching canoe, or blown into the air, announced that it came in a friendly spirit. If received in the same spirit, the chief carried a similar tuft of white eagle's feathers in the welcoming dance which followed.

X The conclusion of a peace was celebrated by exchange of hostages and a long series of festivities. Each hostage was allowed two companions of his own age and rank. The hatchet of ill feeling was buried, and though it might be dug up again the next day, there was all the pomp and magnificence of a true burial.

In the treaty made by Russians and Thinklets in 1805, Baranoff and Lisiansky both comprehend the importance of excessive courtesy. The native ambassador and his suite were invited on board the Neva, and regaled with tea and brandy. In the afternoon they visited Baranoff and were presented each a cloak and pewter medal. The cloak of the ambassador was of fine red cloth trimmed with ermine; those of his followers, blue. Brandy was served, and all invited to the evening banquet at Baranoff's residence.

The ambassador's wife was the most honored guest. As a part of her evening toilet she wore a conspicuous red cloth thrown over her shoulders. Her face was covered with a thick coat of black paint and her head-dress composed of a mixture

of soot and grease. A large labret in her lower lip added a certain matronly dignity. "It was observed that during her frequent sips of fire-water she was extremely careful of this feature, which projected at right angles from the chin, and was regarded as her greatest charm."

The party spent the night at the castle, for they were too intoxicated to leave. The next morning they took their departure, the ambassador carrying away with him a staff on which was wrought in silver the Russian arms, a token of their friendship.

Many of the Thlinket slaves were prisoners of war, or their descendants. More, perhaps, were bought in trade from the southern Indians, who kidnapped or captured them from neighboring tribes. The Flatheads of British Columbia formed a large proportion of this class.

These slaves not infrequently carried on their person evidences of good birth. One owned by Chief Ebbits had the rims of her ears pierced with a series of tiny holes, a mutilation permissible only to the aristocracy.

Formerly a man's wealth was estimated largely by the number of slaves he possessed, one full grown and healthy being held at several hundreds of dollars. He had complete control of them. They could not hold property or marry without

his consent. If one failed to obey an order, his life paid the penalty. The master could put to death whomever he pleased, in whatever way. If he chose to butcher them, merely to prove his wealth and importance, he was at liberty to do so.

In general, however, slaves were humanely treated. They sat around the common fireplace, ate from the same dishes as their masters, and, to all outward appearances, were on a footing of perfect social equality, except that they slept on the upper ledge, furthest from the fire. In the division of labor they did all the drudgery; were hewers of wood and carriers of water; fished for their master; paddled his canoe; swelled his forces in battle; and at his death were sent with him to serve him in the other world. Those sacrificed at funerals were commonly deemed fortunate, for they attained the honor of cremation, and went to the "happy hunting-ground."

Sometimes humane masters gave them their freedom. This usually happened on the occasion of certain ceremonies, when to emancipate brought the master as much, or more, glory than to kill.

On receiving his liberty a slave became a free-man, and was adopted into the clan to which his mother had belonged, either by birth or slavery.

Now and then there comes to light an instance of a weak-minded or orphan child held in servitude, but general slave-traffic is no longer carried on. The class of menials has become merged in the body of freemen.

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CHAPTER V

AMONG the most interesting of the ancient customs, and one of the last to disappear, is the old merciless law of blood-atonement.

Where feuds were universal, and disturbances of daily occurrence, stabbing or shooting affrays were also frequent. Custom gave the friends of the fallen the right to demand blood-atonement. If the murderer were of equal rank with his victim, justice was satisfied. If not, the atonement demanded a substitute, one of higher rank, who should voluntarily sacrifice himself to the honor of his family. Blood for blood, rank for rank, — thus ran the stern Thlinket code.

Strange to say, this willing victim was seldom wanting. A natural spirit of bravado ; the savage's easy nonchalance in regard to life and death ; the certain *éclat* surrounding the martyr ; the compliment of being considered more worthy than another, — all contributed to produce the ready response.

The chief of the murderer's clan summoned his people together, told the story of the crime, and,

in a loud voice, cried : "Who will pay our debt? Who is ready to die?"

A moment of awful silence. Swift, searching glances swept the room. Suddenly, as by tacit consent, the eyes of all fixed upon one man. The people had chosen their deliverer.

Without a moment's hesitation, the man sprang to his feet, threw open the door, and bounded upon the beach, crying in a loud, firm voice : "I am ready, ready to die!" After him followed his friends, taking up the refrain and chanting low and mournfully : "O-o-o-o-o-ä-hää-hä-ä-ich-klū-kuk-ich-klū-kuk, O-o-o-o-o-ä-hä-ä-hä-ä." "Ready to die; ready to die; ready to die."

On the beach he paused, turned, and erect and unflinching courted a martyr's death. In that long line of faces he saw no pity, only stern determination. He fell, pierced to the heart by the bullet of the executioner. There, with nature sobbing on every side in the ecstasies of pity and grief, this innocent victim of another's crime gave his heart's blood to save the savage honor of his people.

A modern instance of this kind occurred in Hoonah some five years ago. Goolzuc, an Indian, deliberately shot through the heart Katchkahook, another Indian, with the old idea of blood-revenge.

The evening before, Jahoodasty (known in Hoonah as "Jim Johnson"), already drunk with hoochinoo, went to the house of Chugungatti, at the other end of the village, to refill his bottle. Chugungatti furnished the hoochinoo, and sent his wife with Johnson to carry it home.

Johnson's manner when outside the door alarmed the woman, and she screamed. Her husband and his friends appeared, and a fierce row ensued. Johnson returned home after his hatchet, intending to murder Chugungatti, but finding his door closed and barred, contented himself with giving the weather-boarding several very heavy blows. He then went home and to bed, saying to himself very probably: "These cuts on his door will be shame enough for Chugungatti."

The friends of Chugungatti held an indignation meeting. "Are you going to let this pass? In the old days it was never so. A man paid such an insult with his life!"

The spark was kindled and fanned into a flame. Chugungatti and his friends hastened to Johnson's home and called him out. Johnson seized his knife, and, in the skirmish which followed, Katchahook, one of Chugungatti's friends, shot Johnson through the forehead. This happened at nine o'clock, December 3, 1888.

Goolzuc, a friend of Johnson, at once demanded

satisfaction. The village missionary alternately begged and threatened, but met with derisive laughter. Katchkahook, whom he implored to save himself by surrendering to the civil authorities, was equally obdurate. "I shot Johnson in self-defence," he said; "if Goolzuc demands my life, he shall have it."

At one o'clock that afternoon, in presence of the whole town, Katchkahook bounded lightly down the steps leading from his home to the beach, paused, turned abruptly and faced Goolzuc, who raised his gun and shot him through the heart.

As recently as the spring of 1891, J. J. Healey, of Chilkat, wrote: "There have been many disturbances this winter. One of them resulted in the death of a woman. It required a good deal of diplomacy and hard work to keep the clans from having a pitched battle, as the friends of the woman demanded blood-atonement. If they would have been content to kill the murderer, I should not have had any regrets; but, no, they demanded two lives in lieu of one, and those of two innocent women who had not even been near the scene of trouble! They claimed that on account of the high caste of the unfortunate deceased two lives were due. With the assistance of Mrs. Dickinson as interpreter, the matter was settled by payment of three hundred blankets and a dance of a week.

The murderer and his best friends were obliged to dress as women and dance with the women, in token that their hearts were as gentle as those of their companions."

It is probable that many crimes are committed that never come to light. In the summer of 1892 a Yakutat woman was murdered by her husband. The friends of the woman and those of her husband made a compromise, by which the latter agreed to give the former a large number of blankets, if they would keep the secret and swear that the woman died a natural death.

Hush-money is paid lavishly. Wrong-doers prefer paying blankets to the shame of imprisonment. As we have said, pride is one of the strongest elements in Thlinket character. Even in cases into which the law does not enter, where there is no compulsion, these people will allow themselves to be brow-beaten into paying large indemnities, simply from fear of losing caste.

Settlement of disputes depends upon the intensity of feeling and the rank of the chief disputants. There is no wrong so great that payment will not right it. Murder, manslaughter, wounds, and accidental killing; theft or loss of articles; seduction, elopement, or refusal to marry an uncle's widow, — may all be atoned for by the payment of sufficient indemnity.

To quote Sir James Douglass, Governor of the Hudson Bay Company, about 1840 : —

“If an unmarried woman prove frail, the partner of her guilt, if discovered, is bound to make reparation to the parents, soothing their wounded honor with handsome presents. A failure to do this would cause the friends of the offending fair one to use force to back up their demands and to revenge the insult. It must not, however, be supposed that they would be induced to act this part from any sense of reflected shame, or from a desire of discouraging vice by making a severe example of the vicious, or that the girl herself has any visitings of remorse, or that the parents think her a bit the worse for the accident, or her character in any way blemished. Such are not their feelings, for the offender is simply regarded as a robber who has committed depredations on their merchandise, their only anxiety being to make the damages exacted as heavy as possible.”

In preferring his demands, the savage makes no distinction between the act and the intent. A wrong is a wrong, pure and simple.

In the summer of 1891 a Sitka boy visited his relatives at Hoonah. One day while hunting with a young Hoonah about his own age, his gun accidentally discharged and struck the Hoonah boy in the temple. The Sitka boy was a Klok wonton, a

division of the Wolf phratry; the Hoonah, a Dokdanton, or Crow. According to custom, the Dokdantons at once sent to the Klok wontons of Sitka and demanded a large indemnity. News of the tragedy reached Sitka in August. The Klok wontons at once began preparations for paying the debt. A delegation of prominent men was sent to notify the Governor.

The policy of the Government is conservative. While it discourages the observance of native customs, it does not directly interfere with such as are not in violation of the law. The executive explained this fully.

"In our laws," said he, "we consider the motive of an act. If the boy shot his companion intentionally, or if any one claims that he did so, he must be tried in our courts, and, if guilty, punished by our laws. If the shooting was accidental, the boy is blameless. In either case none of you are responsible to the Hoonahs. If you want to make them a present of blankets, we shall not interfere; but we want you and the Hoonahs both to understand that they have no claim upon you. If you do not want to give any such present, say so, and we will protect you."

"But we do," the delegation responded without a moment's hesitation. "If we should not, some other tribe of Klok wontons would pay, and we should feel the disgrace all our lives."

A few days later seven large canoes arrived from Hoonah, filled with men, women, and children. The circumstances connected with their landing were so strange that they are worthy of description.

While the canoes were yet a long way off a low sing-song chant reached the shore. "Tinnah, soo-oo-oo-oo-e-ya-e-e-ee-tinnah-soo-oo-oo-oo," sang the Dokdantons, and their listeners were pleased, for they knew then that the Hoonahs had come with friendly feelings. The song was a favorite one with the Klok wontons, relating to their origin, and very gratifying.

Nevertheless they formed in line upon the beach, looking fierce and threatening. The Dokdantons sprang ashore and faced them. For an instant they glared at one another, and we who did not understand, expected them to fall upon each other, tooth and nail. We hardly knew whether to be most relieved or sorry when a friendly Indian whispered, "This not mean anything. They only make believe angry so as by-and-by to make peace."

Old "Father of the Rats," an influential Klok-wonton, stepped forward, and, placing his hand upon his heart, demanded, "Do you see my heart?"

The friendly Thlinket whispered, "Awful funny!" and then explained that it was the custom to speak mysteriously, and that it was great

fun to guess meanings. "We find out who's got the smartest men," he added gleefully.

This strange question asked by "Father of the Rats" referred to an old trouble between the Hoonahs and Sitkas. A Sitka woman had been killed, and the Hoonahs had never paid for her death; nor had the Sitka clan, singularly enough, demanded payment.

"Yes, we see it," the Dokdantons admitted, rather reluctantly.

"Are you very sure?"

"Yes."

"Father of the Rats," with an indescribable gesture, pulled a small heart-shaped ornament from his bosom, and, holding it up, retorted midst the smothered laughter of the bystanders, —

"Was this the heart you saw?"

At this point another Klok wonton approached and demanded, "How long a time has it taken you to make us this visit?" — by which he meant, "How much do you intend paying us for the woman you stabbed?"

The Hoonahs did not care to answer this question, and sang instead, "The sky is cracked. Do you behold?"

"Yes," replied "Father of the Rats," "and what's more, we see the dead ones looking down upon us."

"Very well."

This singular dialogue over, two hostages were exchanged and peace declared. The Hoonahs were welcomed, and at once repaired to the village. The Klok wontons became genial, open-handed hosts, and festivities followed one another without cessation during the whole week. Two hundred blankets were presented the Hoonahs, and at the end of the week they returned home well satisfied with their visit.

A Thlinket is tenacious of his rights. A wrong is never forgotten; even the third and fourth generations are held responsible for the doings of their ancestors.

About forty years ago a fight occurred between the Indians of Wrangel and Sitka which was never formally settled according to Indian custom. Captain Glass, of the U. S. S. "Jamestown," summoned the leaders of the tribes, drew up a treaty of peace, and induced them to sign it. The chiefs shook hands, but war remained in their hearts.

Just now the matter is revived. Shakes and Kadishan, the principal chiefs of Wrangel, have sent a startling message to the Sitkas through the phonograph, which has at last penetrated even Alaska. They propose to go to Sitka and settle old difficulties after native fashion, by which they signify that they still claim the blankets which

were never paid to their forefathers. The message created intense excitement among the Sitkas, who have not at this writing decided upon their answer.

To such an extent do they carry this system of compensation that they often demand payment from those who are in no way responsible, who were not even present at the time of the alleged injury. A narration of these absurd exactions would fill a longer chapter than we care to make.

As one example, the story is told in Sitka of a drunken Indian who broke into a miner's cabin during his absence, and emptied his demijohn of whiskey. The thief died in consequence of his spree, and his friends exacted payment from the poor miner whom he had robbed.

Quite as laughable was the logic of Jim, the well-known Sitka jeweller. One night, soon after the dance given to the Hoonahs, he appeared with an interpreter before the Governor in a state of greatest excitement. His brother had died, he said, and he felt very bad. He waited a moment for an expression of sympathy, and to let his words have their full effect, then continued: —

“My brother die. He catch cold at dance. He very good brother, and Jim feel very bad.”

“And what do you want me to do for you?” asked the Governor.

“He wants you to make the man who gave the

dance pay him fifty blankets," the interpreter explained.

"But if he loved his brother so much, would he then feel all right?"

"Oh, yes, he feel all right then," answered the interpreter, promptly, quite unconscious of any satire in the question.

At the end of an hour Jim went away, silenced but none the less doggedly convinced that he was being robbed of what was lawfully his due.

The last Indian outbreak occurred in 1878. The year previous the sealing schooner "San Diego," on her way to Bering Sea, had made a brief call at Sitka, and shipped six native hunters for the voyage. During the summer one of the "San Diego's" boats capsized, and five of the Indians, with the mate of the schooner, drowned. The surviving Indian returned to Sitka, and reported the death of his five comrades.

The native village was thrown into the greatest excitement. The friends of the deceased hastened to the Customs House, and demanded that the white people at once make good their loss, asserting that they, the Americans, were responsible for the accident. Collector Ball promised to write to the owners of the "San Diego" at San Francisco, and see if any wages were owing the Indians at the time of their death. He did so, and received the

reply that the Indians had been engaged with the understanding that they should share in the schooner's profits, that the "San Diego" had had an unlucky voyage, and that there was nothing to divide with anybody.

The Indians, thwarted in their expectation of receiving a large indemnity, became sullen and threatening. The Americans lived in constant fear of an outbreak. They may have exaggerated the danger, but it was a genuine relief to all when the British man-of-war "Osprey" and the Revenue Cutter "Wolcott" arrived in port.

CHAPTER VI

THE same iron-bound clannishness pervades the social and domestic relations. Tribal honor, here as in warfare, is considered above the individual right or preference. The laws of hospitality carry this idea to what would elsewhere be deemed a decidedly inconvenient extreme. Any one member of a family, a Kiksotti, for example, may claim the shelter of any other Kiksotti's house for as long a period as he sees fit. He lands at a strange village without food or barter or visible means of support, but the doors of his clansmen all stand open to him, and the best their larders boast is at his command. If he repays their hospitality badly, does his entertainers wrong or injury, it is overlooked and concealed rather than resented, that the family honor may not be hurt.

In the matter of inheritance, the kindred claim holds prior to that of the immediate family. A man's natural heirs are, not his wife and children, but his brother or his sister's son; failing these, his female relations, his mother and sisters, take precedence of the wife.

A house descends to the member of the family who helped most in its erection, unless, indeed, the owner, before his death, names his successor. The dead man's canoe may go to a brother, his gun to a nephew, the widow herself very likely disposing of it without a particle of prejudice.

When a man dies, his friends go to the house prepared to take everything from the wife and children except a few of their clothes and personal effects. They make no remonstrances, only assuring themselves that the deceased will be suitably remembered with potlatches, and other honorable ceremonies. The potlatches, or distribution of presents, as a matter of fact, make up to the woman's family, and indirectly to herself, all she sacrifices; but we should think it would be disagreeable enough for a woman to watch the household goods being overhauled by a score or more of her husband's relations, to see her clothes worn by her sisters and cousins in law, and above all to be obliged to marry a slip of a youth just because he happens to inherit the house she lives in!

If the heir has a wife already, he is bound to let her go if she wishes, giving her suitable alimony in the shape of blankets and household utensils. But there is no getting rid of his obligation to his uncle's widow. He must either marry her or

purchase his freedom with a fabulous number of blankets. To fail in this high duty is to be not only socially disgraced, but legally debarred from his inheritance. He has to take all of the legacy, or none of it. Naturally he takes it all. There is nothing to prevent him from retaining his first wife, if her principles do not exclude polygamy, which they seldom do.

The domestic relations as a rule are amicable, but not marked with a great degree of affection. Most of the men have small scruples against sharing their wives with their friends — for gain ; and women can have no very ardent feeling for such husbands. Living as they do, so many under one roof, a very strong sense of propriety is not to be expected. Yet, strangely enough, the ideal of womanhood with them is extremely high. A woman must possess all gentle and amiable qualities ; she must be a quick and diligent worker, modest in her dress and demeanor. She is that, as a rule. One never sees a woman, or even a small girl, scantily clothed. The men and boys go half-naked in warm weather ; but the women are always decently covered.

It must not be supposed that the position of the women is a subordinate one. In every society woman has enjoyed more rights than were legally allowed her ; and the Thlinket woman is a most

striking example of this conflict between the law and the lady, to the discomfiture of the former.

Theoretically a man is the head of the household, and is obeyed as such by the men. But, as since very ancient times the women have been the keepers of the family treasures, they are generally in a position to dictate terms. A writer in the "Century Magazine," some years ago, gave several amusing instances of interference on the part of the wife with her lord's business-affairs. The writer had engaged with a certain Indian to be conveyed to some distant point by canoe, the consideration being thirty pounds of tobacco. Just as the canoe was being pushed off shore, a "Kloochman," *anglice* squaw, appeared on the beach, delivered herself of a few very energetic remarks in Thlinket, on which the man meekly handed back the tobacco, and the bargain was off.

Most travellers have experienced like annoyances in buying skins and blankets. The women are far keener at a "dicker" than the men, and much more difficult to cheat, as shrewd traders have long since discovered.

Thlinket women are not often handsome from our point of view, though they are far more comely than the average Indian woman of the prairies. They are lighter in color than their men, and in early life have rosy cheeks and bright eyes. Their



TYPES OF BEAUTY



hands and feet are not infrequently small and beautifully modelled, and one occasionally sees among them a figure which Hebe might envy. As a rule, however, they are fat and rather stupid-looking, with heavy cheeks, small eyes, and flat Chinese noses. The hair is worn braided in one and sometimes two plaits, bound with strips of cloth.

The labret, or lip-ornament, is fast disappearing; but one still occasionally encounters old women with visages thus hideously adorned. The labret was formerly a symbol of womanhood, of maturity, and when its vogue was universal, a woman was as embarrassed to be seen without her labret as she would have been if surprised minus her last article of clothing. And now, when the custom is so nearly abandoned, inherited ideas are strong enough in the native mind to provide a sort of a substitute in the form of a bit of silver bar inserted in the lower lip.

The old time labret was at first merely a copper wire, a piece of wood or shell, fitted into a small incision in the middle of the lip. When the opening healed a larger object was inserted. Gradually the place became quite a hole, and then the full sized labret was assumed. It was circular in shape and looked something like a spool of button-hole twist. As a rule it was elaborately inlaid with cop-

per or shell, abaloni and haliotis. As age came on, the labret was gradually enlarged, and an old woman's mouth became a most disagreeable sight to behold. Her lip-ornament was sometimes four inches long, and almost as broad, and when she walked it flapped up and down, exposing her ragged teeth, yellow with age, and worn with the coarse food she lived on. Aside from being a symbol of maturity, the labret was a mark of rank and wealth. Female slaves were not permitted to wear it.

Besides her lip, the lady of high degree pierced her nose and ears; and old-fashioned dames are sometimes seen with silver bars in the septum of their noses, and a half-dozen pairs of earrings dangling at each side of their heads.

The most peculiar of the old fashions, and one which still prevails with many women, is the habit of painting their faces and hands with a thick black paint made by mixing soot and seal oil. A woman plastered with this compound, with only the pale circle of her eyelids left clean, is an apparition so truly startling and bizarre as to quite defy description. We never found any satisfactory explanation of the custom. Some declare that the paint protects them from mosquitos as well as from tan and sunburn. Others, on being interrogated, giggle so coquettishly as to leave one no doubt as



INDIAN GROUP, SHOWING BLACKENED FACES

to *their* motives. Fashion, if it excuses bustles, high heels, and nineteen-inch waists, ought to be justification enough for pierced lips and noses; and if rouge and pearl-white be fittingly recommended to paint Lillians and to adorn Rosalies, why should we forbid Mademoiselle *Kattou* her soot and seal oil? It is probable that the black mask is not regarded as the extreme height of elegance, but rather as an every-day adornment, since it is common to appear at potlatches and other functions without the paint.

We saw a curious color-effect once in Yakutat, — a baby, swinging contentedly in his hammock-cradle, with his moon-like countenance rendered still more moony by means of a liberal coating of bright red. The reason is still to seek, so far as we are concerned.

The Thlinket belle of to-day makes up for the loss of her labret by wearing numberless bracelets and rings fashioned from silver coins. These bracelets are really fine and artistic, and not only tourists, but ladies as far down the coast as Portland, are ready to buy from wandering Indians, paying from a dollar and a half to four and five dollars apiece for them.

Besides her jewelry, the typical belle wears a calico gown and a blanket, sometimes of squirrel-skin, but more frequently a common blue or red

"Boston" product. Her feet are bare, unless she is cold enough to wear moccasins. On her head she ties a large handkerchief of the color fickle fashion at the moment affects. A few years ago one wore black altogether; at present, yellow is all the rage. If any article of civilized finery can be obtained, a bonnet with bright flowers, a parasol, or a pair of gloves, it is highly esteemed. We regret to say that the finishing touch is almost invariably a large piece of wild-celery chewing-gum, worn alternately in the right and left cheeks, or violently agitated between the teeth!

The natives ornament their blankets, with not inartistic effect, by sewing many dozens of ordinary pearl buttons to a bordering piece of red and blue cloth; or by totemic figures cut from colored flannel and put on in *appliqué*.

Formerly even more original ideas of decoration prevailed. Niblack writes: "The early voyagers were astonished at the demand for thimbles, and supposed that the women needed them for sewing. It was found, however, that the thimbles were regarded as rare ornaments for blankets and clothing." Chinese coins, the familiar brass "cash," were also much sought after, lending themselves easily to decorative purposes.

The first Alaska visitors found the natives in much more picturesque garb than do the tourists

of to-day. The ancient dress of the men consisted of a skin shirt reaching scarcely to the waist line, a belt, or short apron, and a cloak of furs tied carelessly with strips of skin to the shoulders. The legs and, as a rule, the feet were bare, although moccasins were sometimes worn. The woman's dress was more modest. Her undergarment was made of fine tanned skins, and fell to her ankles. It was also tied securely in various places. She, too, wore the stout cloak of furs.

On occasions of state more elegant clothing was assumed. The chiefs and the rich men wore finely woven shirts and blankets from Chilkat, with totemic designs all over them. On the head was placed a wooden helmet, shaped not unlike a section of stovepipe, carved and inlaid, fringed with claws and teeth, and finished with a veil of whole ermine skins, stitched together with threads of vegetable fibre. Tanned leggings, with dangling pendants of birds' beaks, or bears' claws, fur moccasins, and all the silver and copper jewelry that could find place to cling, painted face, and hair matted with eagle's down, made up the imposing *ensemble*.

In those days a sea-otter's skin was the unit of value, as a blanket is to-day. This matchless fur was worn only by the rich and powerful. Garments were trimmed with it, and ceremonial robes were fashioned from it, to be handed down with

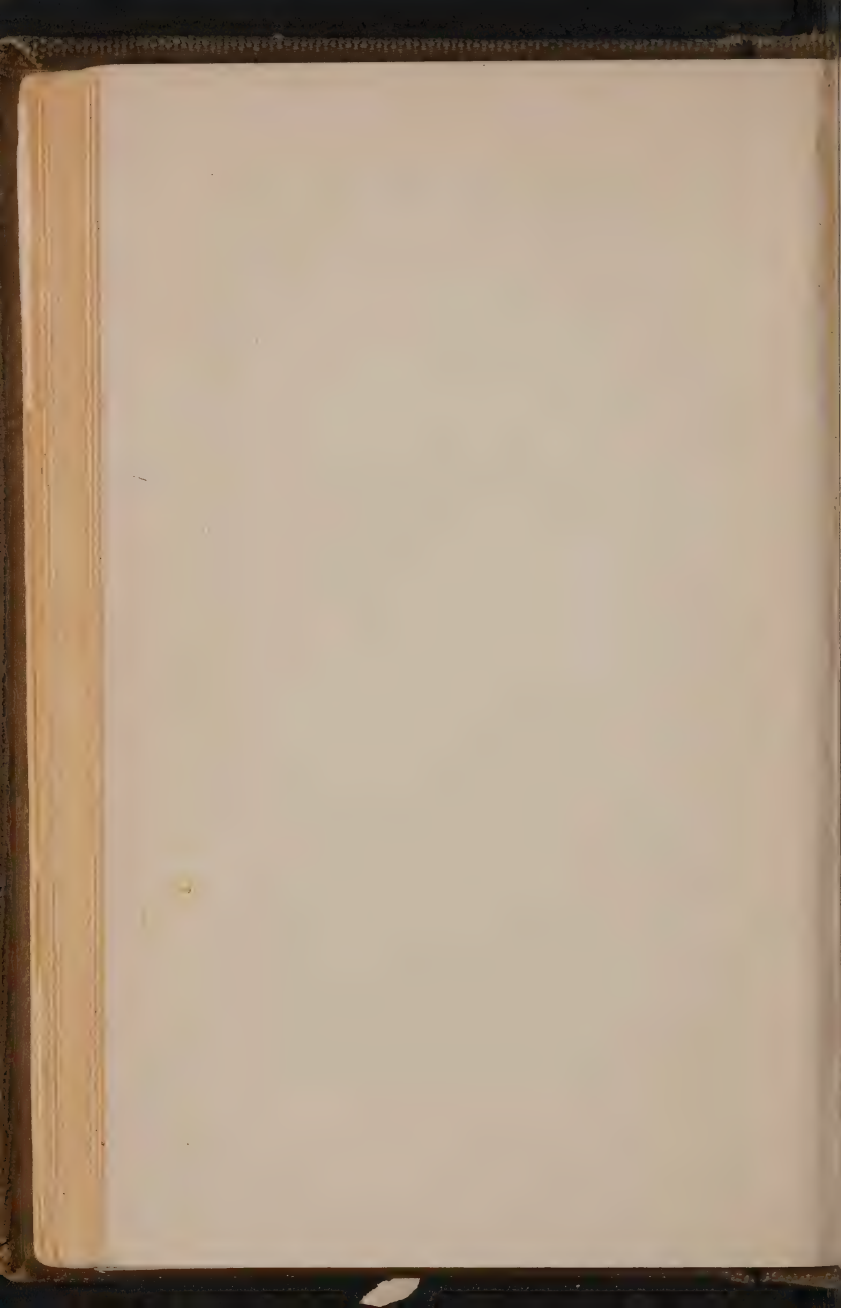
the Chilkat blankets as cherished heirlooms. The Chilkats have always been known as the finest weavers of cloth in Alaska. Their really beautiful blankets, now so rare, are made, the woof from twisted threads of bark, and the warp from the fine inner coat of the mountain-goat's wool. They are always the same shape, and the colors are about the same, — black, white, brown, and an especially pure yellow procured from native moss. The designs are totemic, of course, on both the blankets and the shirts.

The Southern tribes wove in grass and in cedar-bark fibre. They probably made the queer hats still occasionally seen in obscure villages around Dixon's entrance. These hats were exquisitely contrived of fine plaited straw and painted with the owner's totem. They were generally cone-shaped, and were sometimes fantastically high and cylindrical. At the dividing line of the crown and the brim was sewn a bandeau of bark, to fit the head, and, if one desired, tying strings of fibre were added.

The famous rain-cloaks which Dixon found so like those worn in New Zealand, were made of closely sewn reeds, and are said to have been entirely waterproof. They were circular in shape, with a hole in the centre for the wearer's head.



CHIEF WEARING CONE-SHAPED HAT



CHAPTER VII

WERE a Thlinket to tell his own story, he would describe in detail his childhood and manhood, but would have nothing to say of any intermediate period. Youth, that delicious pause between infancy and maturity, has no place in his experience. At an age when our children are barely ready to lay aside pinafore and short trousers, Alaskan boys and girls are declared old enough to marry and begin life for themselves.

Because their childhood is so short, they learn to make the most of its precious moments. They play out of doors from morning till night, covering themselves with dirt from head to foot. Nobody interferes; nobody calls them to the wash-basin. They enjoy themselves to their heart's content, while their parents look on and smile indulgently.

The Indian baby is warmly welcomed. His first tearful moments are attended with much rubbing with oil, and rolling in soft dry moss and pieces of old blankets, after which he is exhibited to his proud relatives, and carried back to his mother to be fed and comforted. A birth name,

usually that of a maternal uncle, is bestowed upon him, and the little Shun-yak-clah becomes a member of his mother's totem. Unlike the subsequent namings, this first one is not attended with any special ceremony.

As soon as the little fellow is old enough to leave his blanket-cradle and his mother's shoulder, and begins to toddle about on his own uncertain feet, he is taken down to the beach and initiated into the custom of daily sea-bathing. If it happens to be the winter season, why, so much the worse! The hapless urchin doubtless grows accustomed to his icy bath in time; but it is difficult to believe that even an Alaskan child, hardened to cold and exposure from its birth, can really enjoy the first plunge.

The first three or four years of his existence are free from duty. He spends his time to suit himself. He plays around the doorstep, runs in and out the house, begs between meals for dried salmon, Thlinket bread and jam, gets under grown people's feet, falls down and weeps, and is picked up and coaxed into good humor again, after the manner of infants from China to Peru.

The boys play ball and tag, and the girls have large families of dolls, none the less cherished because they are made only of smooth pebbles clothed in bits of rags. There are berries in the

edge of the woods to gorge one's small self on, yan-yate, or wild celery, which the great girls go after with baskets; and down by the water there are clams that spout up fountains to tickle their bare feet. And how the little wild baby loves the sea! He paddles in the shallow pools left by the receding tide, launches miniature canoes, catches imaginary salmon and halibut, and amuses himself endlessly digging in the sand, building houses, pursuing crabs, sea cookies, and all the queer little water-beasts he finds.

There are, besides, such a number of games for the big children to play, together if they choose, or boys and girls separately. Would our American children like to know how the little folks of Alaska play "Ha-goo"? Fifteen or twenty of them get together, choose sides and a leader. The sides then form in line, and face one another. The leader waves a curious little banner, which is really only a bright-colored rag fastened to a stick, and calls "Ha-goo." (Come on.) Immediately a little girl responds from the opposite party, trying as best she can to keep a sober countenance while she marches up, in the face of all the grimaces and antics and comic speeches of her playmates, to carry off the banner. If she smiles ever so slightly, she is out of the game, which continues until, one after another, all but one have

failed. The victor is the one who last holds the banner.

Guessing games are very popular among the boys. First counting out, the one upon whom the count falls takes a score or more of tiny sticks and arranges them in a series of groups. The others all keep their eyes tightly closed until he calls "Ready!" Each one then shouts his guess, the one first to give the correct number of groups, and number of sticks in each one, being chosen to lay them for the next play. The day comes when these good times must end, when the serious business of life begins. Very soon these little sons and daughters will be big enough to marry and have children of their own; and there is much to be learned many preparations to be made, before that time comes. The boy must learn all the arts of hunting and fishing; to endure the fatigue, cold, and hunger of a wild life; to manage his canoe and keep it afloat and dry in the stormiest water. His ancestors have been hunters and fishermen from time immemorial, and he falls gracefully into line. He learns to build houses, perhaps by aiding some kinsman. He is, in short, prepared for his position as provider.

In the same way the little maiden is taught to keep house. She learns to gather and dry the seaweed which forms so important a part of the

daily *menu* ; to clean and skin and cook the game the men bring home. She picks berries, dries them and preserves them for winter's use. She is taught to sew, to bead and embroider blankets and moccasins, and to piece squirrel-skins into large handsome cloaks. If her duties require less strength and rugged endurance than the boy's, they are quite as numerous.

When her accomplishments warrant, her mother allows her to give what is called a "picnic feast," — invite all the little girls of the opposite phratry to a feast at which the refreshments are all of her own making. A corner of the big room is curtained off with blankets, a miniature fireplace constructed, and the sticks lighted. The little folks sit around the fireplace and munch dried seaweed and berries exactly as their elders do at the larger entertainments. When they have finished eating, they go out for a frolic on the beach.

The first great event in a Thlinket girl's life is her arrival at maturity. It was the old custom, happily all but abandoned now, to banish the poor child from friends and family, keeping her from six months to a year in a small outhouse, or cell. She was not allowed to stir from this except after nightfall, when she went with her mother for a little stroll, first putting on a peculiar cloak and hood as the badge of her condition.

To one lowly born this occasion brought much discomfort and misery. She was thrust into a small hut at some distance from the house, very cold and cheerless, and usually too small to permit movement or exercise. There she was left to endure as best she might the dismal solitude.

The daughter of wealthy parents fared better. Her imprisonment was of longer duration, as befitted her superior rank and expectations; but she was treated with more tenderness, and generally had several girl friends to keep her company. Her chamber was sometimes elegantly arranged. One girl of our acquaintance, the daughter of a chief, had a room partitioned off from the rest of the house by boards and screen of blankets. The floor was laid with bark matting and strown with jewelry and ornaments. Her couch was a feather-bed surrounded by heavy blocks of solid brass. From a low beam just above the pillow hung a bunch of fancy beads with which she amused herself, choosing favorite colors, coupling each one with some bright wish.

During her whole retirement she was kept very busy. Isolation was designed to teach industry and patience. Every morning before daybreak she was up and at work, sewing neatly, over and over, squirrel-skin squares into blankets, or weaving mats and baskets out of the straws and fibres

brought her by her mother. However irksome work might have seemed in freer days, it was now welcomed as a relief from monotony.

On the first day of the retreat, the tiny pin, changed on the wedding day to a labret, was inserted in the lower lip. The slave who made the insertion was either liberated or put to death, according to the kindly or brutal disposition of his master.

During four days a rigid fast was observed. On the morning of the fifth day, just before the croaking of the raven, the mother appeared, carrying in one hand a little box of grease, and in the other a tiny basket of water. The half-famished child eagerly put her lips to the basket; but her mother overturned it three times before she would allow her to drink. This again was custom, intended to teach self-denial. Finally the girl was allowed to eat the grease, and sip four swallows of water through the hollow bone of a stork's leg. At the same time, complimentary boxes of grease were sent to the prominent families of the father's totem.

After another four days' fast the unhappy maiden was given her regular allowance of food. Only she had to be extraordinarily careful. Dried vension, fish, and potatoes formed her chief diet. It was believed that if she ate fat meat she would become very stout; if she ate clams, very thin; anything

raw, that she would die young ; certain portions of the salmon, that her thoughts and motives would become transparent.

Among other superstitions, it was said that should brush or comb touch her head before the fifth day she would lose her hair. Accordingly, for four days it was left to hang snarled and matted about her face, and the scalp was frequently rubbed with huckleberry juice, as a still further precaution. After all danger was past, the hair was combed, drawn tightly back from the forehead, and made into one long braid, finished at the end with a plaiting and fringe of beads. It is the care taken at this time which protects Thlinket women from baldness in old age. At least so they believe.

Everything was done in this long seclusion to fit the girl for a life of future usefulness. She was cautioned against moving about the room, forming habits of restlessness. She was taught to weigh consequences before committing any act. If she were to talk too much, she would become garrulous and probably a scold. A fretful girl, or one who showed impatience, was certain to develop into a shrew, the unhappy mistress of an unlovely home. Reserve and self-control were emphasized as cardinal virtues.

As time went on she learned to take her banishment philosophically. She was so busy that she

ceased to be lonely. It was a comfort, too, to know that at this time the spirits were especially friendly. Her every wish was sure to be granted. Hence the chamber of the chief's daughter was lavishly adorned with ornaments as the expression of her desire for wealth. She strove also to concentrate all her thoughts upon the acquirement of rapid workmanship and skilful weaving, the accomplishments most dear to an Indian woman's heart.

We are told by a Tongass friend that her tribe had trouble with the Sitkas. Chief Ebbits launched the war-canoes and started out to make war against his enemies. A small hut stood on the outskirts of the village, occupied by a young girl in the first months of her exile. As the canoes passed, her friends threw open the door, and the girl cried aloud: "Oh, that these canoes may return in safety!" For some reason, before reaching Sitka, Chief Ebbits decided to turn about, and the girl's prayer was answered.

The ordeal safety over, a young girl's parents, if they were able, gave a party in her honor. The invitations read, "to see the girl behind the cloth," and were delivered orally (Thlinket script not having been invented) by the members of the girl's own totem, who made the rounds of the village, throwing open the doors of the houses

and calling aloud the names of the invited. As the object of the feast was to introduce his daughter to the young men of the opposite phratry, and find her a husband, a father sometimes invited only thirty or forty of his men friends. At a "stag" party no blankets were given away.

Wealthy families preferred to make more display, and issued invitations to all in the village who were not of the mother's totem, or under the ages of ten or twelve years. Chiefs, and the prominent men of neighboring tribes, were also invited to come with their families.

The master of the household distinguished between his guests of importance and those whom he considered "nobodies," by seating the former on feather-beds, and the latter on common bark matting. The *débutante* was led in by her mother and girl friends, and mounted on a box or block of wood. She was clad in a calico dress, made new for the party, with a costly Chilkat blanket thrown over her shoulders. A basket-woven hat of conical shape, painted with totemic designs, made a singular headgear, underneath which her long hair, ornamented with beads, showed to good advantage. Silver and abaloni rings hung from her nose and ears, while her plump wrists and arms shone to the very elbow with broad bands of silver. Row upon row of fancy beads about the ankles and

embroidered moccasins gave the costume its artistic finish. Conscious of looking her best, the girl met without flinching the curious gaze of those present. The feast began, and blankets were given away, sometimes to the number of a hundred and fifty. In its purpose the occasion was not unlike a civilized "coming-out" party.

A Thlinket girl, if she be healthy and industrious, has plenty of suitors. Beauty is righteously held to be only "skin deep." And to stand high in a man's estimation a maiden needs but to be modest and reserved, speak slowly and quietly, and move deliberately. No man of any position cares to wed a girl who leaves her home to run about the neighborhood.

The story is told of a young woman of Wrangel, that she remained so closely guarded during the year before her marriage that she was seen only by the members of her own household. Meanwhile she worked constantly, learning to weave baskets and bead moccasins. Before the year was out she had acquired such a reputation for industry and skill that suitors sent from every direction to ask her hand in marriage, and her name became a synonyme for womanly virtues.

A girl may expect to be married very soon after she is put upon the market. Until quite recently the husband bought his wife as he would any other

article of merchandise. Even so, the custom was centuries in advance of the old savage method of marrying by capture and violence. A man paid a number of blankets, depending upon the girl's social position and his own, thus showing an appreciation of her worth. Marriage without the payment of blankets was considered unlawful and disgraceful.

A girl usually received her lover's proposal third hand. It was made by the mother or maternal uncle of the young man to the girl's parents, and communicated to her when they saw fit. A family council was called, in which the friends of the suitor referred to his skill as a hunter, his wealth, exploits, and industry, and the girl's friends replied by mentioning her careful bringing up, and her skill in household duties. Each side drove a sharp bargain, which ended, all other points being satisfactory, in a mutual compromise. An engagement was considered as binding as the marriage ceremony, and neither party could withdraw from it without outraging the family honor. Wars have frequently followed causes as trivial as this.

A wealthy man very likely paid eighty blankets, or in the days of slavery two slaves, to purchase his son a suitable wife. A common man could buy himself a spouse with ten blankets. Whatever was paid, etiquette demanded that the father of

the girl should return the bridegroom a present equal in value to one half of what he received for her.

Consanguinity is no bar to the marriage relations; nor if a man has one wife already is that any reason why he should not take a second. However, the number of Thlinket women is but little in excess of the number of men, and this, together with the expense incident to the purchase and support of a wife, tends to limit the practice of polygamy to the wealthy few.

Sometimes a father refuses his consent to a marriage, saying that the applicant is a poor hunter, or unthrifty. A rejected suitor accepts defeat with a bad grace, and if very deeply enthralled perhaps resorts to a love-charm. A Thlinket love potion is too indefinite a thing for description. The principal ingredient is a tiny root found only in the depths of the forest, very hard to get, and known only to a few old women. The lover shadows his dear one until he manages to secure a lock of her hair, or a piece of her clothing. Thereupon he fees one of the wise women, and sends her off for magic roots. He takes these roots, and whatever he has been able to purloin from his sweetheart, a clam shell, and a part of some sea-animal, and buries them all on the beach at high-water mark. The tide comes

in and sweeps over the spot. The maiden experiences a sudden thrill and a nameless but passionate unrest. Her head throbs, and she reels as she walks. Her mood changes to one of despondency, and she goes about her work in a dazed, listless sort of way, paying no attention to her mother's commands. Her lover passes her on the street, and furtively touches her blanket, whereupon the girl's heart is instantly won, and she determines to marry him whether her parents give their consent or not. Should they continue obdurate, the lovers elope. In this case the girl's relatives consider themselves highly aggrieved, and at once exact a large indemnity.

So, at least, a love-charm is supposed to work. Women as well as men believe in them, and buy them. After marriage it becomes unlucky to keep the charm, and it is dug up and destroyed.

Betrothed lovers, under the old system, had very little opportunity of becoming acquainted. Their courtship was managed entirely by their relatives, their own part being merely to cast shy, sheepish glances at one another in the presence of their elders. Such a thing as "making love" was unheard of.

When the wedding day came, the bride's friends assembled at her house, and assisted in receiving the guests. The members of the groom's totem,

one by one, arrived, and were seated in a row by the fireplace. When the house was full, the bride appeared at the door of her little chamber. If a princess, she was very elegantly attired in a Hudson Bay blanket, trimmed with a great many rows of shining pearl buttons. A carved wooden head-dress, inlaid with pieces of abaloni, answered the purposes of a bridal veil. If her soon-to-be husband were the son of a chief, a sheet of copper was laid across the lowest step of the stairs leading to the fireplace, down which she walked very slowly, keeping step to the song of a slave who afterwards received his freedom.

The marriage ceremony consisted of an exchange of presents, a feast, and speech-making. The groom's uncle addressed the father: "We have come to take away your daughter. If she gives this young man children, they shall be to the chief even as his own son." The father grunted his approval, "It is well. We are satisfied and desire our daughter's marriage to this young man." The company with one voice sang: "Come! this is the day when you must leave father and mother."

His guests having all departed, the bride's father despatched his nephew to bring the groom, who had all this while remained modestly in his own home awaiting a summons. The youth ap-

peared, dressed as etiquette demanded, in his oldest blanket. Thereupon the father bade his wife bring out another Hudson Bay blanket, similar to that worn by their daughter, and a kerchief, both of which he presented to his new son-in-law. Food and drink were passed around, and the young man's pipe filled with tobacco. He smoked about ten minutes in dignified silence, and then withdrew, followed by his timid and shrinking wife. It was customary for the mother to give her daughter a wedding present of bedding and dishes, while the father sometimes presented the bridegroom with a slave. The young couple began their married life with a two days' fast.

We have described a Thlinket wedding as it was given us by our wizen-faced authority of the Sitka ranch. Mr. Dall's account differs somewhat :

“ A man wanting a wife sends a message to that effect to the girl's relations. If he receives a favorable answer, he sends them all the presents he can secure. Upon the appointed day he goes to her father's house, and sits down on the doorstep, with his back to the house. The relations, who have assembled, then sing a marriage song, at the close of which furs and calico are laid across the floor, and the girl is escorted over them from the corner where she has been sitting, and takes her seat by the side of the man.

"The dancing, singing, and eating are kept up by the guests until they retire. In these festivities the couple take no part. They then fast for two days, and after a slight repast fast two days more. Four weeks afterward they come together and are recognized as husband and wife."

Marriage customs probably vary with the locality. According to Mrs. Willard, who lived some years among the Chilkats, a Thlinket marriage ceremony does not altogether differ from our own method of marriage. Each of the contracting parties is asked by a common friend if their hearts incline to one another; the parents give their consent; blankets are presented by the groom to his father-in-law; and the couple become man and wife.

To-day, in civilized communities, the connubial knot is tied with the aid of the village missionary. The bride dresses in white, and wears a bridal veil. The groom is assisted by his best man, and the bride has one or more bridesmaids.¹

¹ "Mr. Newstraum and Miss Tasco, a maid of the forest, were married at Chilkat on Sunday, July 1, at the government school-house, Rev. Warne officiating. After the ceremony, a grand feast was served in Chief Don-a-Wak's house. The bill of fare was: Tomato soup and dried halibut, ham and herring eggs, salmon bellies and candlefish oil, wild celery and yan-a-ate, a weed, muffins and French fried potatoes, oranges and apples, thin slices of bear meat, baked salmon and dried salmon and salmon-berry shortcake."


The Thlinkets have none of the new-fangled aversion to large families. The man whose wife gives him no children feels himself defrauded, and justified in returning her to her parents and demanding back his blankets.

In former times childbirth was attended with such barbarous customs that it is doubtful if a civilized woman could live through a single such experience. When the time of her suffering came, the poor woman was driven from her home as an unclean thing, and no matter how bitter the cold, or how wild the storm, obliged to remain outside, away from all help or sympathy, until her baby was born. Not until then was she conveyed to a previously constructed outhouse or shed, in which shelter she remained ten days before she was allowed to enter the house. Happily this cruel custom is almost abandoned.

Divorce laws are extremely lax. A man may put away his wife at will. If she is sullen or unmanageable he may be rid of her by sending her home to her parents, and at the same time get back his marriage money. Discovery of her infidelity also warrants her return, but should a sensitive brother wipe away the stain upon family honor by shooting her, not he, the murderer, but the husband who sent the woman to her death would be called upon to share with her paramour in paying the indemnity to the injured relatives.

If a man sends away his wife without just cause, he is expected to give her a certain proportion of his goods. If she deserts him, and seeks shelter underneath the home roof, the father is bound either to return her to her husband or give back one half the number of blankets he received for her on her wedding day.

The fact that native custom gave a man the right to annul his marriage contract, and demand back his purchase money, proves that marriage, as it formerly existed, was a mere business transaction.



CHAPTER VIII

THE untutored intellect is everywhere extremely unapt to look upon the future as a serious matter. At first thought one is inclined to believe the Thlinkets an exception to this rule. All the short Alaska spring and summer men and women alike toil as industriously as the busy bee to lay up stores for the winter; but, unlike that admirable insect, they do not appear to have an accurate measure of their resources. It is the unusual thing if the supplies last until the spring run of fish begins, and were it not for the bulbs, wild lily, parsnip, and a few other which they are able to dig early in the season, many would actually starve. At least so says Poole, in 1863, and Niblack, in 1888, confirms his statement. The regular routine which fills the year begins in March when the halibut appears. This fine fish, with the richer salmon, is the staff of life to the native. He eats it fresh, dries quantities for winter's use, and renders into oil whatever is left. If fish is the staff of life, oil is the sauce, the spice, the dainty dearest to the Thlinket palate. They obtain it

not alone from fish, but from seal, goat, deer, bear, porpoises, stranded sharks, and various vertebrates. For religious reasons, whale blubber is never eaten. Oil is prepared by boiling the partially putrified animal matter, and skimming the grease from the surface. Stored away in jars and boxes, or more primitively in the hollow stalks of the giant kelp, it is used as a sauce into which almost every article of food is dipped before being eaten.

To return to the year's routine: as soon as the spring opens the permanent villages are well nigh abandoned, unless they happen to lie very near the fishing or hunting grounds.

Halibut and herring are taken during the latter portion of the year; eulachon in the spring and fall. The eulachon is sometimes called candle-fish, on account of the great amount of fat it contains. In cooking it melts almost like tallow, and with the insertion of an ordinary wick it makes a very fair candle. Sometimes it is used as such without cooking. The salmon runs first about the middle of July. It is impossible to tell "fish stories" about salmon; the reality outstrips the imagination, even the angler's imagination. These early fish are not considered of much importance at the canneries, either as regards size or numbers; although a single haul of two to five or six thousand is not unheard of. In August, the Tyee of

King Salmon makes his appearance, and runs until December. Tyee is the Chinook appellation for chief or lord.

We have nothing to teach these people about fishing. As far down the coast as Puget Sound, you are recommended to a "Siwash layout," if tempted to go trolling for salmon, as you generally are during the first run you witness. Not that this particular "layout" is used in Alaska. The object there being fish and not sport, they spear or net their salmon, or, higher up the streams, trap them in weirs, — a kind of a framework of woven twigs and branches built across the water where it is swift and shallow. These wiers are about six feet apart, so that when the salmon leaps the first one he finds himself in a quiet pool from which there is no egress, except by way of a dip-net or spear. Of old, the streams were held in severalty by one or more families, and poaching was severely punished. This method is gradually giving way to the civilized habit of seining on shares.

A brief description of the rude but ingenious and practicable apparatus used in fishing deserves space. First, the spear, the shaft of which is a light cedar pole with a detachable head; to this is fastened a long, stout cord or sinew, and at the end is a bladder. The salmon is speared; the

head detaches itself; and all the fisherman has to do is to watch the bladder, and, when it becomes quiet, pick up his fish.

They retain also their old style fish-hooks, and with good reason, for theirs never foul on the bottom as ours do. The only use to which they put steel hooks is to make them into spearheads. This adaption is accomplished by merely reversing two large hooks, and binding them to the end of the spear, harpoon-wise.

A halibut outfit consists of a large wooden or iron hook, a long line, heavily weighted, a wooden float, or perhaps a bladder arranged to keep the hook just clear of the mud, and sometimes a second hook attached to the other end of the line. With this latter contrivance one man is able to tend to several lines at a time. The canoe is anchored, the line baited and sunk; as soon as a fish is hooked, it is hauled up, played skilfully, despatched with a club, and pulled into the canoe. If any one thinks it an easy matter to get a fish weighing from fifty to one hundred and fifty pounds into a light boat hollowed from a cedar log, he is greatly mistaken. And yet, with all the appliances of civilization and of science, we cannot begin to compete with the Indian when it comes to halibut fishing.

Perhaps the most ingenious part of the outfit is

the sinker, usually a stone of ten or twelve pounds. Around this is wrapped, with many turns and twists, a stout line, one loop of which is tucked under a strand in such a manner that the line is instantly loosened by pulling out the loop. This releases the stone, and the hook is so much the lighter to haul.

During the great runs of herring and eulachon, a singular rake or comb is much used, the Indians beating the water with it, bringing up several fish at a blow. The rake is nothing more than a stout lath, with a row of sharp metal or bone spikes on one edge. Herring are also taken with drag-nets and baskets.

Most other fish are hooked. For cod and the like, a single line sometimes bears a hundred or more hooks, each baited with a bit of squid or a piece of white halibut-skin. Using the long line like a trawl, almost every hook comes up with a fine fish on it.

The Thlinkets are slow but patient hunters, showing considerable skill and enterprise in their pursuit of game. Fur-bearing animals are usually trapped. Deer, which are very abundant, are eagerly sought for food and for their skins. In certain seasons, they are readily lured by the hunter, who imitates their peculiar cry very cleverly, and shoots them as they approach.

Both black and brown bears are numerous in Alaska; the latter grows to an enormous size, and is too ferocious to be easily captured. The black bear is smaller and rather timid. His skin is more valuable than the larger species, and his flesh, when young, is said to be very good eating.

The few sea-otter yet remaining are hunted with the old fashioned muzzle-loading guns, the only ones the natives are allowed to possess. The otter is surrounded by a number of canoes, and shot when he rises to the surface to breathe. The poor marksmanship of the hunter sometimes results disastrously to others than the otter. Custom gives this, and all other game, to the man who inflicts the first wound.

From March to July, the seal herd makes its annual trip from lower latitudes to Bering Sea, following the contour of the coast along the shores of Southeastern Alaska. The seal-fishing business is confined to this season. The natives gather together their belongings, including their entire families, embark in their great war canoes, and follow the track of the herd until it passes out of their reach. Before the adoption of firearms, they used harpoons, or bows and arrows.

Wild fowl may be captured by strategy more easily than in any other way. Geese, after they

have shed their large wing-feathers, are unable to fly and are readily caught. After night-fall, the Indians hunt them with torches and clubs; but they rarely, if ever, attempt to shoot them on the wing.

While the men are hunting and fishing, the women and girls are no less busily occupied gathering and drying berries, roots, herbs, and seaweed, preparing them to suit the Indian taste. Five or more women go out in canoes at low tide, and break the weed from the rocks. Returning, they select clean, flat stones, and spread the wet stuff on them to dry. It is then sprinkled with salt water, folded, put in boxes, and pressed down by means of great rocks. It is made ready for the table by chopping into bits and boiling. Oil is eaten with it, as a matter of course. Oil goes with everything, even berries.

Another way of cooking certain kinds of seaweed is to break it into a dish of warm water, add sugar, and beat it with a spoon to a stiff froth. It is first reddish in color, but becomes white with the beating. Sometimes dried berries are added to this delectable mixture, which is called *sopalally*, and is a prime favorite with the Indians.

For further vegetable food, they scrape the inner bark of the spruce and hemlock. These scrapings are dried and made into cakes like the

seaweed. Potatoes are cultivated, the original tubers having been introduced by a sea captain many years ago.

Birds' eggs are eagerly sought in the early summer. In former times particular localities were pre-empted, as it were, by several families, and egg claims were inherited with other properties.

Besides these, we should mention the use of fish-roe. This delicacy is either removed from the captured fish or collected in the water. Branches are scattered along the water's edge near well-known spawning-grounds, and on these the salmon deposit their roe. It is left to partially dry, and is then again dipped in water, when it is easily removed from the branches, and dried or eaten fresh as the Russians eat caviar. In the former case, before serving, it is pounded between stones and beaten to a cream with water. It is also much liked boiled with sorrel and made into cakes.

This about makes up the list of eatables, and a fairly good long list it is, including flesh, fish, fowl, and vegetables. Bread, crackers, cheese, and canned goods of all kinds are in great favor, wherever they can be purchased. As the Indian becomes civilized, his palate becomes dainty. In Sitka, the native buys the best of everything. It

is next to impossible to deceive him in regard to a flavor or brand.

Whiskey and the native distilled hoochinoo are favorite beverages. The so-called whiskey sold to the Indians by unprincipled white men is a vilely adulterated decoction with very little pure liquor about it. Alcohol under any disguise finds a ready sale. In want of anything better, the native will get drunk on lemon-extract and even perfumery.

Hoochinoo is simply a distillation from potatoes, black molasses or cheap sugar being added to facilitate fermentation and increase the amount of alcohol. The potatoes are cooked and dumped into the still, which is usually an empty kerosene can, and there left to ferment. No more intoxicating, maddening drink exists. It completely robs a man of his senses.

Clams, cuttle-fish, mussels, and oysters form part of the winter's *menu*. The Pacific oysters differ widely from those found in other waters. The western ones are smaller by half than blue points. They are darker in color and taste, as some one has said, "like an old copper cent." The taste is in fact distinctly metallic, but, once one becomes accustomed to it, pleasing rather than otherwise. The Alaska oysters are said to be very poisonous out of season.

DRYING FISH



Besides gathering and preparing food, the women also lay by the winter's supply of grasses and fibres for weaving. The wet season is long, and would be very dull if there were not plenty of work on hand. In this period of indoor life, all their tools are manufactured, their fishing-tackle repaired and made ready for use, and ropes and fish-lines woven and twisted out of the stems of giant kelp, wild hemp, shredded seaweed, or vegetable fibre. The giant kelp alluded to is utilized in numerous ways. The stems, cured by soaking in fresh water and drying in the sun, or in smoke, are used for all kinds of cords and ropes, while the hollow bulbs with which the long stalks are tipped make excellent bottles for oil.

The canoes of Alaska almost deserve a chapter to themselves. They are to the native what the camel is to the Arab, the fleet-footed steed to the Bedouin, or the more humble cayuse to the plains Indian.

The fine yellow cedar is preferred above all other woods, but it is comparatively rare, being found only in the southern border of the territory and on Queen Charlotte Islands. The largest canoes are made from the trunks of the giant cedar, and most of the others from Sitka spruce. After hewing the tree, and roughly trimming to the proper dimensions, the great log is towed to

the village, where the patient cutting and hollowing out is completed with the slow but certain adze. The beam-widening is done by steaming with water and red-hot stones, stretchers being inserted as the wood expands. The outside is smoothed with a chisel, and finished by long rubbing with sandstone and shark-skin.

In shape, these canoes are very graceful; and their sea-going qualities are uncommonly fine. The largest of them come down to Washington and Oregon every hop-picking season, and at that time of the year the Sound and its neighboring streams are crowded with the long black boats loaded with household goods, provisions, and whole families of men, women, and babies.

If we admire the finished results of Indian labor, our admiration is turned to amazement when we examine the rough tools with which the native works. He has, in fine, emerged from the stone-age only inasmuch as he now fashions his implements from iron and steel, instead of the flint and green jade of his fathers; the primitive design he in most cases still retains.

The best reason for this conservativeness lies in a slowness to grasp new ideas, although superstition has probably something to do with it. In the past, and the not very distant past either, the totemic symbol carved on the tool was firmly be-

lieved to give it a supernatural power. Fishing and hunting clubs are also carved with a figure of the animal which they are intended to despatch. A special weapon is reserved for each animal, and the decoration is supposed to add marvellously to its usefulness.

CHAPTER IX

EXCEPT something occurs to disturb the general harmony, the Thlinkets live together with very little friction. They are easy-going and good-natured, and among themselves decidedly social, as one soon discovers who is with them any length of time. If this were not true, so many families could not live underneath one roof without quarrelling, nor could clans-people endure the constant strain upon their hospitality. A spirit of conviviality is necessary and evident. And yet, despite the apparent free-masonry, each one has his own social status, depending, as it does elsewhere, on wealth, ability, and ambition.

Society was formerly composed of three classes, chiefs and sub-chiefs, with their families, holding first rank, the freemen corresponding with our middle or industrial class, and the slaves, the menials. The lines were not strictly drawn. Liberated slaves joined the order of freemen, but in all social matters remained inferior. On the other hand, any freeman might become a sub-chief, provided

he had the money to build himself a house and remember his ancestors with a "potlatch." Rank is dependent chiefly on wealth; and a thrifty, ambitious man often outdistances one better-born. The caste system prevails, but its rules are less ironclad than those which bind the Indian of the Eastern Hemisphere. By a judicious expenditure of money, and a little clever manœuvring, it is possible to mount the highest round of the social ladder.

Very many of Thlinket institutions have in view the uniting of individual and totem. Totemic law not only settles all legal disputes, but other problems as well, — inheritance of rank, eligibility in marriage, the right to give entertainments and their kind, the number and rank of the invited guests, what presents they shall receive, and so on.

In every way much more is required of the higher than of the lower classes. A chief's daughter, we know, is banished for a much longer period than her playmates of commoner origin. As we have also seen, when a murderer belongs to a lower station than the man he murders, his life is not considered worth the taking. The friends of the dead man demand, instead, the life of one of his clansmen, better born than himself.

The blue-blooded aristocrats of native society adhere so strictly to their unwritten laws of eti-

quette that we can easily distinguish them by their manner alone. Not that they are a whit less dirty, ill-smelling, or gluttonous than their neighbors, if possible they are more so ; but they carry themselves more proudly, walk with more dignity and deliberation, talk less, and assume more. The raggedest old man in the village, when talking with a white man, will draw his blanket around him with the air of a monarch. As one of them once said, "The earth is a round ball, and the white man is on top now and the Indian underneath ; but some day the ball will roll over, and it will be the Indian's turn to be on top."

They are, one and all, ludicrously fond of display. Their manner of dress, festivities, and the methods they take to attract attention prove this. What tourist does not remember Saginaw Jake, of Killisnoo, and the half-dozen different garbs in which he paraded the wharf during the steamer's stay in port? Self-satisfied under all circumstances, he is especially important in his policeman's uniform.

As the years go by, chieftainship becomes more and more an empty honor. Political aspirants now apply to the Governor for positions on the police force. The officer of the Indian police, who wears a uniform and badge, and draws a monthly salary of fifteen dollars from the gov-

ernment, thinks himself the biggest man in the territory.

It has become a fad among prominent people to put sign-boards above their outer doors. Mrs. Thom has two names printed on her door-plate; "Emeline Baker," the name given her by the missionaries, and, in parenthesis beneath, "Princess Thom," the sobriquet donated her by tourists. A few doors farther on, lives a man whose door sign informs the public that he is "Father to a large family of Orthodox Christians." Saginaw Jake and Kah-Chuckte of Killisnoo are more ambitious and extol their worth and position in verse. Jake's coat-of-arms are painted high above his door, and beneath them these lines:—

"By the Governor's commission,
And the Company's permission,
I am made the grand Tyhee
Of this entire illahee.

"Prominent in song and story,
I've attained the top of glory.
As Saginaw I'm known to fame;
Jake is but my common name."

Kah-Chuckte modestly concedes superiority to Jake, but asserts that for all this he is the rightful chief of Neltusken.

" Rightful chief of all Neltusken,
Gunch Tah-Koogh, and Koochka-Heen.
Known as such I am Kah-Chuckte,
From Yakutat to far Stickeen.

" Yes; my name, it is Kah-Chuckte,
Man-slayer, in the Boston tongue;
Old as yonder granite mountains
Is the lineage from which I sprung.

" Stores of furs and blankets pillaged
By the Adams pirate crew,
Though Kah-Chuckte, ever neutral,
Dwelt afar from Kootznahoo.

" Now I ask not for position,
Such to Jake I will concede,
While Kah-Chuckte, from your nation,
Will, for justice only, plead."

These poetic effusions come from the pens of white residents, are purchased at high figures, and are erected only by a few of the wealthier class of Indians. It is amusing to see the profound respect shown for a bit of writing. An Indian cherishes a written testimonial as something priceless. Tantlatch, a member of the Sitka ranch, has a number of such stowed away in a brass-studded chest. They have been written at his earnest request, by certain officials, and are very guarded and discreet, something after this style : —

"We believe this man, Tantlatch, to be a good man. He seems very friendly and peaceable. He does not drink, so far as we know, and behaves himself very well."

Tantlatch, in his simplicity, is perfectly satisfied, and swells with conscious dignity whenever he unfolds them. His wife is famous as a basket-maker. The beautiful black and yellow Indian baskets on exhibition in the Alaska section of the World's Fair were her work. You loiter to study effects in basketry, and Tantlatch invariably brings out his cherished credentials, waiting, with a pleased smile and a look of eager anticipation, the profound sensation he is sure will follow this revelation of his great importance.

Possibly the fact that the natives are so excessively fond of display may have something to do with their readiness to attend church services. The Greek church in Alaska has a membership of fully twelve hundred Thlinkets. The costly interiors, gilded robes and jewels of the priest, the strange incense and mysteries of a service carried on in a foreign tongue, are both bewildering and fascinating. They have beside their own proper share of human nature, and enjoy an opportunity of wearing their best clothes and idly gossiping on their way to and from church.

Others regularly attend the Presbyterian mission,

and make long speeches and prayers in the Thursday evening experience-meetings. In Sitka, it is quite common to see them go to church in little knots of families, the father carrying his youngest-born on his arm. Ask the child's name, and you will find it that of some distinguished maternal ancestor, another evidence of family pride.

Mention has been made so frequently of "Princess Thom" that it is only right to define her real position in Thlinket society. To begin with, she is not a princess, nor even well born. The stories printed about her power and authority are quite as false as her title. The prestige she enjoys she has won as a business-woman. Her ventures have a wonderful way of turning out well, and she is now reputed to have between ten and twenty thousand dollars stowed away in chests and blankets. Despite her wealth, she was known as plain Mrs. Tom until a few years ago, when an admiring foreigner, in an attempt at gallantry, gave her the high-sounding title of "Princess."

"Princess Thom" is one of the familiar sights of Sitka. Almost any day you may see her huge mass of avoirdupois, swathed in a flowing Mother Hubbard, waddling along the main highway, her fat face wreathed in smiles as she receives the good-natured salutations of those she meets.

It is rather a shock to the tourist to see royalty

elbowing its way to the front of the bargain drivers ; but where money is to be made, the " Princess " throws dignity to the wind. She is at present sole owner of the little schooner " Active " which she keeps running between Sitka and Yakutat, sending up to Yakutat bales of cotton, blankets, tobacco, sugar, and flour, and exchanging them for the furs and curios of the interior, which she sells in turn to the Sitka merchants at a smart profit. Once a year she makes the trip herself. Her shrewdness and foresight would do credit to a Chatham Street Jew. Her own people think her very close and sordid, and she is generally unpopular among them.

A further evidence of the Princess' commercial talents is the judicious way in which she distributes Christmas presents. Early Christmas morning she makes the rounds of the village, remembering each of her American friends with an Indian souvenir. One knows not at which to be most amused, the deference with which the lady presents her gifts, or the unembarrassed way in which she stands back and waits for a return present. She expects to receive something worth about twice that she has given, and, in the end, by dint of perseverance, usually succeeds in getting it. A clever way, surely, of finding a market for cheap curios !

The Indians seem to enjoy visiting white people.

They carry their curios with them, partly with the hope of selling, and partly to furnish them with an excuse for calling. They squat upon the floor in groups of twos and threes, and untying the red bandannas which hold their treasures, spread them over the carpet. Even after one has said, "no" and "good-by" several times over, they continue to linger, chatting and discussing the various articles of furniture and bric-a-brac about the room. They are shrewd observers of manner. One young girl remarked to her friend, as they were leaving the house of an American, "She talk quite too much. Sure her mother not teach her to be quiet when she first become a young woman."

In sunshiny weather it is customary to spend the whole time out of doors. When not on the water, or lounging about the town, they squat along the platforms of their houses, the men whittling miniature boats and paddles from cedar sticks, and the women weaving root-baskets.

At almost any hour of the day a group of gamblers may be seen sitting in a circle on the beach. If beyond sight, they are not beyond hearing, within a mile's radius. The game is a curious one, played differently in different sections of the territory. A gambling set consists of a leather case of small sticks, usually made of cedar or wild crab-apple, and in some cases elaborately carved.

About Sitka, only the simpler sets are used. The gamblers divide into two sides, and face one another in a circle. Each division chooses an experienced player as leader. Twenty sticks are thrown into the pool in the centre, and the game begins. It is played with two other sticks, smaller than those used as markers, one of them quite plain and the other crossed through the centre with a black mark. Each leader in turn holds these two sticks, and shuffles them back and forth under cover of his blanket, the point of the game being for the opposite side to guess which hand holds the plain stick.

It is by no means an easy thing to do. The stick flies back and forth with such surprising dexterity that the guesser is a very shrewd fellow if he can locate it with any certainty. To further confuse his judgment, his opponents keep up a distracting uproar, beating the ground with batons, shrieking and howling, and singing in guttural accents a monotonous chant.

The gambler endures loss with stoical indifference. He will lose his last possession without betraying the slightest emotion, and yet his love of play is so intense that he will sit for hours at a time without once changing his position. When all else is gone, he has been known to stake his wife and children, and sell even himself into slavery, in a despairing effort at recovery.

A berrying party is to the women, what an exciting bear-hunt is to the men. They go off in large parties, and return home with their canoes fairly weighted down with baskets of blueberries and salmon-berries. They supply the village at the rate of ten cents a bowl, and any dish is a bowl, whether it be a yellow mixing-dish, a tin pail, a basket, or a two-quart basin. During the berry season the whole length of Lincoln Street is lined with these fair vendors, who sprawl along the sidewalk, and besmear their faces with juice and dirt, while they await their purchasers. If the berries do not sell, they appear quite indifferent, and eat them themselves. The fastidious taste of the white man unfortunately will not always allow him to patronize this worthy industry.

To economize, one must be actuated by some special motive. With the Thlinket it is not the dread of a rainy day, nor any anxiety for the future of his children; he saves that he may buy tribal standing by giving his money away. A man may be ever so wealthy, and yet his wealth bring him no consideration until it has been squandered in a "potlatch." When one has built himself a house, and in presents given away all the money he has left, he has reached the goal of his ambition.

In general, festive occurrences mark the successive epochs in the life of the individual, or events

of unusual importance. To the first class belong the feasts which launch the young girl into society and celebrate her marriage, efforts of wealthy parents to establish their children, the feast which announces a youth's arrival at man's estate, or a death in the family, the ceremony of tearing down an old house and building a new one, or a potlatch on a grand scale to the memory of an ancestor.

The second class includes the ceremonies attending a declaration of war, the ratifying of a peace, welcoming of guests from a distance, atonements and retributions.

Dancing, singing, and speech-making form a part of every ceremony. In this respect the Indians have not changed since those early days when the first explorers wondered at the amount of singing and dancing necessary to arrive at an understanding. The gay season begins about Christmas time. The wealthy entertain on a lavish scale. All that native ingenuity can suggest is done to make the entertainments occasions of great display. Through them all run the petty jealousies and rivalries, trickery, intrigues, and falsehoods usual in civilized communities.

CHAPTER X

IN Southeastern Alaska it is the almost universal custom to give presents at a social gathering. The potlatch, as it is called, is a part of every ceremony. Personal property of every description is disposed of: blankets, pots, kettles, dishes, bowls, spoons, furs, calicoes, robes, knives, spears, guns, and ammunition, each guest being remembered in proportion to his own distributions in the past, or those which he may be expected to make in the future. In olden times, slaves were presented to the very wealthy.

Such a party would be a disastrous one to an American; but the Indian has learned to make it a good investment. He gives where he is confident of a return. He learns to weigh the claims of social aspirants in the light of his own expectations, and becomes skilful in distinguishing delicate gradations of wealth. Calico and cast-off clothing are distributed among the poorer people, and blankets given to those who have money or position. The host establishes a reputation for munificence, and rests on his laurels, confident of



A MODERN TYPE



being invited to everything "going on" for years to come.

In a modern potlatch the host confines his liberality to blankets and rolls of calico, tearing them up into strips about a yard long, and giving one or more to each guest. People entertain less frequently, gradually imbibing the American idea that to have money brings more recognition than to give it away. Popular opinion notwithstanding, there is no waste connected with these distributions. The tiniest scrap of cloth is utilized. Directly after a potlatch numbers of small boys appear in new suits, perfect patchworks of color and variety. The stripes on one trouser leg may run up and down, on the other, horizontally. One sleeve of the shirt is, perhaps, one color, its mate, another, the yoke a third color, and the body a fourth. The more pieces and colors, the better pleased the little fellows are.

An entertainment is sometimes given by one man, and sometimes by a number of men belonging to the same totem who seek to strengthen their position and dignity among distant tribes. A private individual wishing to give away his property, and win position, summons his friends and relatives, makes out an inventory of his possessions, and asks their advice in determining what shall go to each guest.

Niblack says, "It is often the custom, previous to calling together the friends, for the host to quietly distribute his property among his friends and the principal people of the village, who, by etiquette, are required, just before the time set for the pot-latch, to return the presents with interest or increase, that is, for four blankets to return six, or in some such ratio. In this way all the tribe immediately concerned know what they are to get, and the immediate friends and relatives know what the visitors are to receive."

The number of visitors depends altogether upon the host's wealth and the importance of his "function." An ordinary man giving a party sends invitations to those of his own village only, while a chief, or one with an eye to chieftaincy, issues his summons to distant villages. To the "coming out" feast of a young girl it is proper to invite only those of the opposite phratry.

Besides this marriageable daughter, the father may have younger children with position to establish. A feast for the little folks was once thought very essential, and it made considerable difference to a man whether he had one or several children, as he was expected to liberate a slave for each child.

To a feast of this kind the prominent families of neighboring villages, as well as the home people,

were invited. The host and his guests exchanged flattering greetings, several hundred blankets were torn up and distributed, and an elaborate collation served. The several children were led forward in the order of their ages, and their noses and ears pierced. Each child also had its mother's totem tattooed upon its wrist, and received a new name. Slaves were liberated, and the multitude sang and danced.

Custom required the guests to bring each of the children a Hudson Bay blanket, bordered with pearl buttons, and outlined in the same way with their family totem. One occasionally runs across a blanket of this kind even now. It retains all its old prestige. The wearer of it is beyond all question well born. So too with the woman who has a series of tiny holes extending round the outer rim of each ear; she is an aristocrat by birth and bringing up.

A child ordinarily receives three names, — a birth name, later that of some ancestor, and finally one of his own choosing. It is the duty of a grown-up youth to accumulate property, and, with the aid of his mother's people, assert his manhood by giving a feast and potlatch from his own house. This ceremony corresponds with that of the young girl's "coming out" party, both of which are falling into disuse. It was practically a house-

building bee. It was not enough for the youth that he inherited a home; he was expected to pull that down, plant his totem pole, put up the rafters of a new house, and "celebrate." He was then ready to marry, become the head of an establishment and a man of influence in the community, known always by his self-assumed name.

When a man has decided to build, he sends his friends word to that effect. They assemble and hear his plans. Oil is passed round, or the less innocuous hoochinoo, and all drink to his success.

To build one of the old style mansions was much more of an undertaking than is the more modern two-storied frame structure of to-day. Immense beams had to be brought by water from long distances. The raised dais and corner-posts of the interior were formed by the slow, tiresome stroke of the adze. The wealth of carving on the exterior meant months of painstaking labor. Cooperation became rather a necessity, the builder summoning his clansmen from far and near to his assistance.

True to his principles, the Indian seldom overworked. But few hours out of the twenty-four were occupied with genuine hard labor, the rest of the time not spent in sleeping, was filled in with gambling, feasting, and dancing.

In the "good old times" the builder buried a slave alive under each corner-post to show his opulence and disregard of wealth.

It is still customary, just before a house is completed, to give a second feast, with dance and potlatch, in which the host pays up all outstanding obligations, and his debts to his fellow-builders. If he has any property left, he goes to work and finishes his home. If he has not, he smiles contentedly, reflects that his social position is assured, and occupies the house just as it is. A large unfinished frame-house stands to-day at the lower end of the Sitka ranch. The owner squandered his last penny in a preliminary potlatch, but considers himself well paid by the memory of it. His wife is as pleased as himself. A Thlinket couple will economize all their days, if in their old age they may have means to tear down their old house and build bigger, not because they need it, but to gratify their ambition.

The potlatch has been described as a feature of entertainments in general. It is also a separate ceremony to which invitations are issued as to any social occurrence. By giving away his property, the host hopes to attain a reputation for liberality, and increase his chances of one day becoming chief.

The distribution takes place in true Christmas-tree style. The blankets, or goods, are generally

stacked in a great heap near the fireplace. The host stands by, clad in ceremonial attire, and holding a baton in his hand. When ready to tear up the blankets, he signals two of his clansmen, one of whom mechanically measures off quarter yard lengths, while the other slashes away with his jack-knife. The host strikes the floor with his baton, his brother-in-law calls off a name, and an attendant springs forward and carries the one designated one or more strips of blanketing. The evening ends with a song and a dance.

The manner of dancing varies. In general the Thlinket dance consists of a swaying, swinging movement of the body, the feet remaining firmly planted, and the legs bent slightly at the knee. Women dancers seldom move from their position. The men are more animated, and spring forward every now and then at a signal from their leader, occasionally advancing or wheeling about with a sudden jerk. The very oddity and absurdity of the dance make it highly amusing to Americans as well as to Indians.

Dances carried on for no other purpose than enjoyment are commonly called "cultus" dances, the Chinook expression for unimportant, "no good." The aim of the dancer is to be original in his dress. Chilkat and Hudson Bay blankets are worn by those who can afford them, cedar



STICK DANCE

blankets and common store products by the poorer classes. Masks are also worn in the dance, but not so commonly as the great number of them in our museums would lead one to expect. Some have their faces painted with black and red diagonal, or horizontal, stripes. One chief wears a conical hat woven of roots or bark; another, a wooden headdress of the kind heretofore described, trimmed with ermine skins, seal whiskers, and abaloni, hollow in the centre, and filled with swan's-down, which flies all over the room when he dances. Some carry drums, others rattles and whistles. Each one dresses as gorgeously as he can, and makes the greatest possible amount of din and uproar.

The accompanying sketch illustrates a dance held at Fort Wrangel, in 1887, called the "Stick" dance, an imitation of the dances given by the Tinneh Indians of the Upper Stickeen. It will be noticed that a number of the men wear the buckskin costume of the Tinnehs.

Among the most important of ceremonies are the feasts held annually for the dead. As regularly as the berry season comes round, the canoes are draped with bright colors, and enthusiastic berry pickers start off to gather fruit. On their return, they give a series of commemorative festivities of

the dead, in which berries of all kinds figure in the refreshments.

Carved memorials are put up and dedicated to the departed. An occasion of this kind was celebrated at Tongass not long ago. Chief Hoskotch, whose grandmother was drowned in the river Naass, invited all the people of Tongass to join him in erecting a memorial in her honor. The old lady had been a very prominent member of her tribe, and immense numbers responded to his summons. Hoskotch received them with a gracious dignity, and made a short address, in which he alluded in terms of deepest respect to his dead ancestor. After the chief of the Haidas had responded, the big totem was slowly hoisted into place, amid much yelling and confusion.

A little apart from the crowd stood Hoskotch's tall and pretty niece. She was dressed in blue calico, with beads about her neck and ankles, and a Haida hat upon her head, — a curious hat, round and very high in the centre, woven of cedar roots, and painted with the symbol of a bear on either side. At a signal from her uncle, she drew near. Hoskotch threw over her shoulders a Chilkat blanket, and, turning to the people, said: "Let all the people from now on call this maiden 'Two houses built into one,' for this day the two branches

of the family are united." The young woman turned and walked slowly between the two files of Haidas, followed by a slave who from that moment was free.

A great many blankets were given to the men, while the women went away happy with household gifts, — dishes, baskets, berries, and beads.

Besides these feasts and dances, the Thlinkets often indulge in theatricals. Portlock (1787) describes the ceremonies which attended his welcome among them.

"The chief appeared in different characters during the time his people were singing, and always changed his dress when he varied his character. While he did this some of his companions held up a large mat, by way of a screen, to prevent us from seeing what was going on behind the curtain. At one time he appeared in the character of a warrior, and seemed to have all the savage ferocity of the Indian conqueror about him. He showed us the manner in which they attacked their enemies, their method of fighting, and their behavior to the vanquished enemy. He next assumed the character of a woman, and, to make his imitation more complete, he wore a mask which represented a woman's face with the usual ornaments."

It is usual in theatrical entertainments to act

the traditions and legends relating to the chief's totem. All sorts of ingenious devices are contrived to illustrate these old familiar stories. Niblack thus describes a performance which he witnessed in Wrangel a few years ago.

"The figure of the bear was a mannikin of a grisly with a man inside of it. The skin was obtained up the Stickeen River, and has been an heirloom in Shake's family for several generations. The eyes, lips, ear-lining, and paws are of copper, and the jaws are capable of being worked. A curtain screen in one corner being dropped, the singing of a chorus suddenly ceased, and the principal man, dressed, with a baton in his hand, narrated in a set speech the story of how an ancestor of Shake's rescued the bear from drowning in the great flood of years ago, and how ever since there had been an alliance between Shake's descendants and the bear. This narration, lasting some ten minutes, was interrupted by frequent nods of approval by the bear, when appealed to, and by the murmurs and applause of the audience."

Not long since a bright mind of Juneau conceived the idea of organizing a dancing troupe to give entertainments on the arrival of each excursion steamer. The outer page of a little circular announced in large letters : —

NATIVE DANCE

By the Renowned Dancers of The

THLINKET TRIBE OF ALASKA INDIANS,

Under the management of

D. MARTINI,

The Barnum of Alaska, and the celebrated Takou
Chief

YASH NOOSH,

Head-chief of one of the most war-like tribes of
Alaska, but succumbed to the influence of civilization.

Admission \$1.00

Children50

Over the leaf, the following spirited and varied

PROGRAMME.

Tash-Noosh — An ancient dance participated in by
the Indians more than 200 years ago.

Ya-koo-tee — An ancient dance in honor of visiting
chieftains from afar.

Ya-keen-nah-klakee — A wild and weird dance of the
interior tribes. Very ancient.

On-de-Koo-Sot — A representation of the Shaman, or Indian Doctor's dance, when expelling an evil spirit from a patient.

Kow-Whi-Ka-Klanik — A dance making friends among the tribes. Never performed since the days of Baranoff.

Salmon Dance — This dance takes place on the occasion of the spring run of salmon.

Love Dance — Chaste and pure, with its beautiful and soul-inspiring music.

Chichigoff Waltz — By Hoonyiah Indians.

These natives will delineate the different characters of the many tribes of the Thlinkets of the "Land of the Midnight Sun," from the mighty and powerful Chief Gowhee, who may be seen in his gorgeous chieftain's uniform, to the pure and dusky maiden of our pine-clad shores attired in her virgin robes, also the celebrated Shaman, or Indian doctor, from Snettishane Guana-hlusk, who will appear in his weird and wild incantations in expelling witchcraft from his patients.

The Queen of Alaska Tragedy, Sit-cum-ta-ha, will wear her rich stage toilet bequeathed to her by her royal mother, the Queen of the fierce and warlike Chilkat tribe.

Many tourists attended, and went away with the mistaken impression that they had seen a genuine Indian dance. If one would see a Thlinket dance in its native purity, he must visit Alaska in the winter season, when their festivities for the most part take place.

The most gorgeous dances we ever attended were given by the Klok wontons of Sitka, in honor of visiting Hoonahs. Five large canoes, gayly decked out with flags, and carrying about eighty people, landed one October day on the Sitka beach. They made a stay of about a week, and during the whole time feasting and dancing went on continuously.

Night after night, the great square room was packed. The spectators all sat huddled together about the fire-place and centre of the room, mothers holding their babies and half-grown children in their arms. The only light in the place came from the pale, sickly rays of a half-dozen cans of burning fish-oil. Odors foul and stifling poisoned the atmosphere. The spaces next the walls were reserved for the dancers, who, one by one, bounded through the open doorway; seen in the dim light of the burning fish-oil, their peculiar costumes, fierce gestures, and wild songs made one irresistibly shudder.

To render their appearance yet more grewsome

their faces were painted, some of them black as negro minstrels, with white or red stripes running diagonally across their cheeks and foreheads. The faces of the women had tattoo marks painted on them in imitation of those worn by their grandmothers long years before.

The master of ceremonies wore a "Boston" calico shirt as an under dress, and over it a toga-like mantle of red cloth bordered with a broad black band, very effective. His head-dress consisted of a mass of eagle-feathers fastened horizontally to the crown of his head, so that the quills formed a border. He held an albatross-wing in his hand, which he used as director's baton in leading the singers.

As near as we could make out, the entertainment had something the nature of a masquerade ball. One dancer wore a wooden mask representing a bear's head, gaudily painted in red and blue. In dancing, he clumsily imitated a bear's movements. Another had his face painted to represent a halibut, one side of it black and the other white.

A third ingeniously played the whale-killer. He was wrapped in a black blanket, and had fastened to his back a cedar stick marked with a white spot, which stuck up as a fin as he entered, bending and bowing.

A fourth crept, hopped, and croaked like a bull-

frog; a fifth went spinning round as a top; a sixth imitated an Indian doctor,—and so on, each one adding his part to the amusement.

The chief interest centred in the “gowakon,” or the hostages interchanged by the Hoonahs and Sitkas. A symbolical name had been assigned to each one, which he acted in dancing. The two Hoonahs were called respectively, “Fort” and “Evil Spirit;” the Sitkas, “Mt. St. Elias” and “Summer and Salmon.”

“Mt. St. Elias” first appeared holding a blanket before him and carrying on his head a cone-shaped block of wood, supposed to represent a mountain peak. As he danced, he sang:—

“Come and see the great mountain,
The signal observed by our fathers
To tell them the state of the weather.
See! the fogs are creeping down from the summit,
They hang in dark masses about the centre;
This shows continued fair weather,
And calm and safe waters.
Launch your canoes, and fill them with whatever is needed
for the journey,
And we will go and hunt the sea-otter.”

Before the nods and grunts of approval had had time to die away, “Evil Spirit” sprang through the doorway, wearing a pointed wooden hat on which was carved the figure of a demon. With indescribable gestures, he sang:—

"Behold the spirits are coming,
 Old and young, a mighty band;
 Let's make all the noise we can,
 So they'll be willing to come.
 A capital thing it'll be for us:
 We'll have health and never misfortune;
 One of us will be a shaman,
 And he'll have rattle and caucau, the medicine-man's store;
 And our sick ones will all be well again."

"Summer and Salmon" carried a box with two
 little wooden fish. He advanced behind a blanket-
 screen, singing and dancing.

"Summer is here! The salmon are running!
 Wolf tribe, see and draw near.
 The Crows would not believe us,
 But we knew we were right.
 The bright summer days have come;
 The salmon are here once more.
 Come, Wolves, come together here on the shore,
 And watch them leap from the water."

The fourth "gowakan" carried a miniature fort
 with two tiny images in its shelter.

"The enemy is coming! the enemy is coming!
 To the fort, the strong fortress, let every one rally.
 There is room for us all, for our wives and our khesun
 (children).
 We have a good fortress; get every one in it."

Dancing and singing continued for four nights,
 concluding with the Klok wontons' famous peace
 song: —



DANCING COSTUME



"We have made friends with our enemies;
We have shaken hands in reconciliation, —
And this is the song which signifies peace.
We will be true to the pledge of our handshaking,
And will not fight any more.
So pass around the blankets,
And we will dance as hard as we can,
That the Dokdantons may not excel us.
Let our children rejoice that we have made peace!"

CHAPTER XI

THERE is no conviction more firmly rooted in the savage breast than the belief in witches and demons. "If a soul can leave the body and return to it at will," the barbarian reasons, "what is there to prevent another spirit from taking possession of the body during the absence of its rightful owner?" Evidently nothing stands in the way of such an outrage. Cases of delirium, epilepsy, and insanity constantly recur, and are never regarded by primitive man as natural, but rather as the results of the evil machinations of some enemy.

Plainly, the only way to rid a possessed body of its malicious lodger is to make the body so odious that even a wicked spirit will not care to inhabit it.

Such is the function of the medicine-man. Among people so timid and ignorant, it is an easy matter for one of superior cunning and bravado to assume the rôle of protector. The shaman is primarily an exorcist, his mission spiritual, rather than physical. He pretends to understand all mysteries, to be on intimate terms with the spirits,

and to have the power of routing demons. He has a number of masks and rattles carved to represent the heads of the animals, and these he claims put his spirit *en rapport* with the animal deities. As he increases their number, he advances in dignity and position.

Up to a few years ago, he was the most influential man in the territory. He played upon native credulity by a thousand cunning devices, until he came to be regarded as a supernatural being, to be feared and courted. Often a chief purchased his alliance, and shaman and chief mutually upheld each other in the fear and respect of the community.

In a case of serious illness the medicine-doctor was the first person summoned. He received in advance his pay for professional services, but with the understanding that he should cure the patient or refund the money. If the patient died, and he were unable to throw the blame on others' shoulders, he was himself regarded as a sorcerer. As may be imagined, his position was no sinecure. Life as well as reputation depended on proving that the man he could not cure was under an evil spell. In this he was powerfully assisted by the very ones whom he accused. They, as likely as not, admitted guilt, either because they were so completely under his control that when denounced by him they

doubted their own innocence, or because they foresaw the uselessness of denial.

When a patient is to be treated, the news spreads quickly, and villagers assemble to watch proceedings. The sick man lies bolstered up among blankets near the fireplace, his friends and relatives crowding about him. The shaman enters, followed by a slave bringing a fresh relay of masks and rattles. The keen eye of the doctor takes in the situation at a glance; lighting upon a pile of blankets near the door, it kindles with a gleam of satisfaction. Ugly enough at all times, he is trebly hideous when performing the mysterious rites of his office. He is quite naked, except for a girdle of talons, or claws, about the thighs. His long hair, matted with eagle's down, hangs loosely over his shoulders and bare back. Each hand holds a rattle, and his face, excepting the eyes and mouth, is concealed by a grotesque mask. He springs forward, shrieking and yelling. His gleaming eyes appear like fiery balls. His body writhes and twists. He shakes his rattles and brandishes them aloft, darts towards his patient and thrusts them in his face, blows into his mouth, pounds him on the chest, threatens and reviles him. He continues until he has lashed himself into such a fury that the foam trickles from his mouth, and only the whites of his eyeballs are visible.

For some hours he continues the wild dance, his audience meanwhile watching every movement with feverish excitement. They assist in expelling the evil spirit, by all the time keeping up a deafening uproar, striking the ground with batons, and singing a hoarse chant to the beating of a drum. Among Americans, the patient who could live through such heroic treatment would be considered well along the road to recovery.

From time to time, the slave steps forward with a change of mask and headgear. Attaching four small pieces of devil's club to the sick man's neck, and giving him for a pillow a wreath of the same, the shaman declares: "I will give you so long a time to recover," naming two or more days. During this interval, the patient diets on bread and salmon crumbs. If he is then no better, the doctor declares that beyond doubt he is bewitched.

Woe to the one against whom the shaman has a grudge! He again excites himself into an unnatural frenzy, passes from one swoon into another, and pretends to hold communication with the spirits. He emerges from the swoon with a far-away look in his eyes, glares straight before him, lifts very slowly a long, bony finger, and levels it at some one in the audience, or, if his victim is not present, calls aloud a symbolical name. To prove that he has spoken truly, he fills his hat with water,

and calls three witnesses to see the reflection of the witch's face. Either they are the shaman's accomplices, or very much afraid of him, and rarely fail to support his statements.

In an instant the house is in confusion. The poor wretch, gasping and protesting his innocence, is seized by the infuriated mob, his body stripped of clothing, and heartlessly beaten, or stoned. When all but insensible from pain and fright, he is dragged along the beach to a low stake, scarcely a foot and a half above the ground, forced to crouch down before it with his knees drawn up to the level of his chin, and there bound, head, hand, and foot, by a sinew rope braided into his hair. Neither rank, age, wealth, nor sex can save one thus denounced. Tender youth, innocent girlhood, and hoary age are alike doomed.

Such excruciating torture is not to be realized. The tender flesh is cut by the harsh sinews, the face becomes livid and swollen, the features distorted, the parched tongue hangs black and heavy from the mouth, the eyes grow dim and blood-shot. Forsaken and reviled, the wretched sufferer drags out the long days and nights; no kindly hand brings him food or drink, no friend offers sympathy or word of comfort. Even oblivion is denied the miserable one; with painful distinctness his ear catches each taunt, each abusive epithet of his tormentors.

A witch is thought to be the devil's agent. His villany is done at the bidding of evil spirits, to whom he is believed to have sold his soul. "Not until he has learned to fear physical suffering more than mental disquiet, will he give up his evil practices," so the Indian reasons. He looks upon the sufferings of the tortured with grim satisfaction. Another blow has been aimed at witchcraft; again the evil spirits have been thwarted.

In an abandonment of despair, the condemned not infrequently chooses death or slavery in preference to the suspense and misery of slow torture. Even should he survive his sufferings, and persist in denial, he may never hope to recover his lost position; to the end of his days he will remain an object of suspicion and dislike, disowned by family, and branded with ignominy.

On the contrary, the one who dies under torture, with his lips sealed, is regarded in the light of a martyr. His friends exact a large indemnity from the shaman, or the family of his patient, for the loss of so estimable a clansman.

The shaman in his day was a great power for evil. He is now consulted less frequently. Reports of outrages are fewer, are located at greater distances from the seat of government, and are more difficult to verify. Only in obscure villages does he retain a vestige of his old power. Not

long ago, a tragedy occurred at Klockwon, a small settlement on the upper Chilkat. A woman named Jeess Uck was accused by Scundoo, the local doctor, of bewitching a fellow townsman. According to the usual custom in such cases, she was beaten with devil's club, and otherwise cruelly abused, tied to a stake with her head bent backwards, and left there to starve.

Word was sent both to Juneau and to Sitka; but there were no funds in the treasury even for the arrest of a murderer. Emboldened by the delay, Scundoo next accused a little boy at Di Ya; and he, too, was tied and tortured. Finally, after two or three months had elapsed, a marshal arrived from Juneau, took Dr. Scundoo in custody, and carried him off to Sitka jail to await his trial. When first arrested, he announced his intention of starving himself; but after missing a breakfast, his mock bravery oozed out, and he is said to have eaten a hearty breakfast with apparent satisfaction.

The Haines missionary, Mr. Warne, thus concludes a letter written to the Board in New York:

"Scundoo is a hard citizen. I hope his hair will be cut short, and his head painted red, which is the worst calamity that can befall a native doctor. That would be far worse disgrace in Thlinket eyes than to swing on the gallows, which is the end probably in store for him."

Even where shamanism is not practised, there is still no epithet one can apply to an enemy so shameful and galling as that of "witch!" It is darkly rumored in Sitka that the widow of Chief Anahootz has dealings with evil spirits. She goes her way solitary and friendless. People give her a wide berth in passing, and whisper under their breath certain low words of warning.

The methods a witch is supposed to employ in the exercise of his black art suggest to us certain dark plots in the Ingoldsby legends. He follows the one against whom he has a grudge until he gets possession of some particle of his clothing, crumbs of his food, nail parings, or cuttings of his hair. With these secreted on his person, he repairs at nightfall to the lonely grave of a shaman, and thrusts them down the dead man's throat into his stomach. Decay follows as a matter of course, and the doomed one sickens and dies, or is supposed to do so, together with these symbols of his body. If the wretch's villany is discovered, he is made to draw out the decaying substance, and is thenceforth branded as a witch, shunned and feared by every honest Indian.

In the letter heretofore quoted, Captain Healey, of Chilkat, adds:—

"The Indians are dangerous in the extreme. When they have an ill-feeling toward any one,

they take food and soak it in an Indian doctor's grave until it becomes putrid, and then stealthily deposit it in the man's food. He sickens and dies unless his friends suspect the trouble. If strong enough, they tie up the guilty one, and hold him until settlement is made.

"This is one of the secret methods by which the Indians poison their enemies, and I have no doubt that many have been destroyed in this way. I can now understand why many strong men die without apparent cause."

The shaman is necessarily a man of extraordinary courage and nerve. He must not only be endowed with an unusual amount of cleverness and cunning, but must also go into physical and spiritual training to fit himself for the profession. The nephew of a deceased shaman is the rightful heir to his uncle's headgear, masks, and rattles; but he cannot take his degree in shamanism until he has held communication with the spirits. To do this requires the performance of certain strange, mysterious rites, awful enough to appall the stoutest heart.

Alone he seeks the distant forest, in its solemn stillness to await the spirit's coming. If the gods are friendly to him, in his travels he will come upon the body of a dead land-otter. He cuts out the right side of this animal's tongue, and conceals it



SHAMAN'S GRAVE, CHILKAT BLANKET

in a neighboring crevice ; this done, he strips the body of its skin, and plunges deeper into the forest, taking the skin with him as the token of his election.

For twenty-four days, eight at a time, the would-be shaman maintains an almost absolute fast, drinking no water, and eating only the roots of the devil's club. Upon the sixteenth day of his fast, the spirit of Yehl appears to him. The last eight days he spends in lonely vigil by the side of a shaman's grave. Yehl again appears ; and this time, in the semblance of a very small man, enters into the novice's being, and becomes his guide and inspiration. He returns to his native village, worn and emaciated, carrying in his face the traces of his ghostly conflict. In the performance of his professional duties, he henceforth carries with him a basket of salt water and a few ashes. When the ashes float in the water, he knows that he is acting under the guidance of the spirit.

This is the Sitka story. Mr. Bancroft states that the chief of the spirits sends the novice a living land-otter.

"He meets the beast face to face, and four times, each time in a different fashion, the man pronounces the syllable 'Oh !' Upon this the otter falls instantly, reaching out at the same time its tongue, which the man cuts off and preserves.

If, however, the spirits will not visit the would-be shaman, nor give him any opportunity to get the otter tongue, the neophyte visits the tomb of a dead shaman, and keeps an awful vigil over night, holding in his living mouth a finger of the dead man, or one of his teeth; this constrains the spirit very powerfully to send the necessary otter."

Granting the shaman to have attained the highest pinnacle of fame and glory, we must yet think that he pays rather dearly for these honors. As long as he lives he is subject to certain restrictions. His whole life is one protracted fast, allowing him to eat only two days out of every five, and also forbidding him the use of clams, seaweed, and mussels. Whenever he eats, and especially when his meal consists of fresh fish, his friends must preserve absolute quiet. It is said of a shaman that once while he was dining off fresh halibut, a child in the room moved, and the shaman died of choking. Taking into consideration the man's long fast, and the native style of eating, this story does not seem wholly incredible.

Instances are cited in which men have become shamans without their own volition, some lucky chance putting them in communication with animal deities. Such heavenly made shamans attain great power, and in popular favor outrank those who have won their degrees by their own exertions.

The Thlinkets themselves realize that shamanism has lost its power among them. They recount with bated breath the doings of their dead heroes, admitting with plaintive candor that the young men of the present generation lack those spiritual gifts which made the doctors of their own day famous.

A heavy blow was directed at shamanism by a certain quick-witted naval commander who punished a rebellious doctor by cutting off his long hair. Like Samson, shorn of his locks, he lost his power. Native sense of humor is strong, and a short-haired shaman unheard of. Their poor idol fell from his pedestal, never to be reinstated.

Though the novice seeks a land-otter, it is probable that a mink or marten would answer his purposes as well. The tongue of any animal not used for food is thought to possess peculiar properties. A certain strange ceremony performed over the tongue of one of these sacred animals is believed to insure the fulfilment of any prayer.

To explain: a man seeks skill as a gambler. An adventurous friend, with the same desire, consents to join with him and take the oath of secrecy. For several months they submit themselves to a course of training, refusing fish, clams, and mussels, and ending their self-imposed martyrdom with a ten days' fast on the bark of the devil's club and a little sea water.

Together they trap a land-otter, or mink. With timid eagerness and great caution, they drag its body to a secret trysting place, tear the tongue from its throat, and place it, all reeking with blood, on a small handful of twigs. Then drawing back, they grasp their knives and plunge them into its dripping flesh, at the same time calling aloud upon the spirits to answer their prayers.

Success is proportionate to the length of time the tongue remains safely hid. The choice of a hiding place is, then, the most difficult feature of the undertaking. The once harmless member has become full of menace ; should it be discovered, or disturbed by as much as the passing of a breath of wind, destruction follows. A timid man will very likely burn the tongue ; but one with courage will brave the danger for the sake of greater gain, concealing it in the trunk of a tree, a chink in the wall of some deserted dwelling, a hollow log, or some other nook equally sheltered. This is a very old custom, and one still practised throughout Southeastern Alaska. The necessary steps are not, however, so well understood as formerly, and its practice is attended with greater danger.

Not long ago, a serious accident occurred on one of the southern islands. There lived there a very poor man who had not the means to remember his dead brother with a potlatch. He grieved

very bitterly, until a friend from Cape Fox suggested that they try the experiment of praying for wealth over a dead land-otter's tongue. This they did, but omitted some important detail in their preparations.

For a time all went well, and every enterprise of the two men turned out successfully. One unlucky day the Alaskan joined a hunting party. He raised his gun to fire at a passing sea-gull, pulled the trigger, and himself fell to the ground, tongue and side completely paralyzed !

He was carried to his home, where, a little later, his friend and fellow-conspirator visited him. As he looked upon his stricken comrade, the same curse fell upon him. They were placed side by side on the same mattress, and are reported to be still living and helpless.

A similar instance came under the writer's own observation. Two brothers in Sitka secured and lacerated the tongue of a raven, hiding it in a chink in the outer wall of their house. One morning, to their terror, they found it missing. Through fear and suspense one brother lost his mind and killed himself. The other brother made numerous attempts to follow his example and was finally successful.

CHAPTER XII

DEATH is only one of the forms of insensibility which man notices. He witnesses repeated instances of reanimation, and his mind refuses to recognize death as peculiar, or so far exceptional as to differ entirely from those other more familiar forms, sleep, insensibility from wounds or sickness, trances, swoons, etc. Occasionally he has his inferences strengthened by the revival of one he supposed to be dead. Cases are by no means rare, either in former times or in the present, when persons have "come to life" at the very edge of the grave, or the funeral pyre. Death, that strangest of mysteries, that veil through which no living eye has ever gazed, that echoless chasm — after all wherein do our ideas of it differ now, on the threshold of the twentieth century, from those which we held "ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled," or as far back as we choose to go? Only the most advanced of us venture to disbelieve in a literal resurrection of the body. Millions of enlightened men and women offer daily and hourly prayers for the welfare of those they

loved in life. It touches rather than surprises us to read poems like Rossetti's "Blessed Damozel," who wept in heaven because her love remained on earth, or that other less widely known poem of the child "homesick in heaven" for her mother. It will be long before the most philosophical learn to be satisfied with the idea of death as a mere return to primal elements. Somewhere, we all believe, or hope, we shall touch again that vanished hand, and find it warm, living, and sympathetic as of yore.

The savage rarely witnesses a natural death, and consequently refuses to believe in it as a natural or unaided occurrence. Early opinion held the dead man himself responsible. They beat him with sticks; they called his name, and reproached him bitterly for leaving them. "Why do you not return?" "Who caused you to do thus?" "What sin did you commit?" thus they interrogated him, firmly believing that he heard, although he was never known to answer.

Few primitive people believe that dead men cease to need their bodies, or that those bodies cease to require nourishment, warmth, and care. Along with the belief that resuscitation is to take place, the idea is more or less clearly defined that the form must be preserved. Where we find exception to this rule, it is among the lowest races,

who, even if they held this belief, would have no means of embalming the body or otherwise caring for it. All, however, hold the opinion that the spirit suffers if the corpse is neglected, or disposed of after what in life it considered an improper or impious manner. The Thlinkets appear to have been a little uncertain as to their own ideas of the proper thing in this regard. The tribes around Sitka, and indeed almost all of the Northern Indians, cremated their dead. The Southern Thlinkets abandoned that custom many years ago, preferring to bury the fur-wrapped corpse, or to raise it on a scaffold.

Long ago it was the custom to entomb the bodies of those killed in the battle, the head, strangely enough, being severed from the trunk and enclosed in a separate casket. Dixon, Portlock, Vancouver, and other early explorers found a number of such tombs. They have all disappeared however.

The missionaries have had much difficulty in persuading those who practised cremation to substitute the Christian method of burial in earth. The younger generation have about yielded to their influence, but the older people still cling tenaciously to the early custom. There may be of our readers those who will wonder why the missionaries waste time and eloquence to effect in the

matter what many consider a change for the worse, and which is, at best, an unimportant detail. But it would be difficult, if not impossible, to hold Christian ceremonies at a barbarian cremation. The change of association is probably necessary to the change of faith.

There is a theory that the origin of cremation was the fear of an enemy of the deceased obtaining a bone, or bit of flesh, from the corpse, and with it working evil against the spirit or its living kindred. The Thlinket of to-day will tell you that cremation insures the warmth of the soul in its new abode.

Slaves were thrown into the sea after death, or disposed of in any convenient manner, unless they were sacrificed "to wait on their dead master," or on the occasion of a great feast or other important ceremony. They then were honorably burned or buried.

Shamans were not cremated because cremation was believed impossible; fire would not burn a shaman. Their bodies were doubled up, with knees meeting the chin exactly after the Aztec and Peruvian manner, and placed in a sepulchre which was little more than a pen of logs or boards, raised some feet from the ground on four posts. This sepulchre was always erected on some island or high point of land overlooking the water, its location usually having been selected by the shaman

himself. There, after death, he was reverently borne in his own canoe, lowered into his last resting place through a hole in the roof, and laid on his side on the floor. His canoe was sometimes left outside, paddles and all, ready for launching. Whenever a Thlinket passes one of these lonely spots in his boat, he drops a bit of tobacco or some article of food into the water, that the shaman's spirit may send him good luck.

When a chief dies he is dressed in his finest raiment, laid on a bed of state surrounded by tokens of his wealth and greatness, and visited by crowds of natives from his own and neighboring villages, until burial or cremation becomes absolutely necessary. Of late years, it has become the custom to put the body of a chief in a casket, after it can no longer be displayed, and allow it to remain in the house, in state, for a year or even longer, the rest of the family moving out and finding other quarters. Thus Chief Shakes lay at Wrangel, and that famous old rascal Chief Skowl at Kasa-an, Prince of Wales Island. A shaman is left the first night after death in the spot where he breathed his last. The morning following, he is removed to the opposite corner, and left twenty-four hours. The next day, he lies in the third, and the fourth day in the fourth corner of the room; all the family fast meanwhile. On the fifth day,

he is dressed in his ceremonial robes ; the two wands that marked his high profession are placed one in his hair and the other in his nose ; the head is wrapped in a piece of basket-work, and the body bound together in the posture already described.

There is enough ceremony attending the death and burial of even unimportant persons. The body is bound with bark ropes, wrapped in blankets and grass-mats, and placed in a corner. The friends assemble in mourning garb, or, in other words, with faces thickly smeared with black paint. After they are seated, the family enter, more elaborate still in the matter of trappings and suits of woe, and leaning on properly carved canes or staves. They seat themselves, wailing, on the floor in the middle of the room. A most dismal and lugubrious song is chanted. The lamentations continue for some time ; then a feast is spread, and all refresh themselves. It was at this interval, in the olden times, that the slaves were sacrificed. The nearest relative, or the giver of the feast, killed the poor wretches with a single blow on the head, with that ghastly weapon, the slave-killer. In the midst of the renewed wailing the pall-bearers enter, or as many of them as are not on the roof of the house waiting to draw the body through the aperture made for the occasion. Sometimes, but rarely, the body is passed through a window, never through the door.

The funeral pyre is built just back of the house ; the body is laid thereon, and covered with seal-oil. The master of ceremonies gives the signal ; the drums beat, the mourning cries recommence, and the torch is applied. After the corpse is consumed, the ashes and the fragments of bones are collected, placed in a box, and carried to the dead house, or the tomb. The unburned wood remaining from a funeral pyre is never under any circumstances used for fuel.

The guests wash their faces of the funeral mask, and repaint them for the feast, which lasts three or four days, during which presents are distributed by the heir of the dead man. The duty of erecting the carved mortuary column in memory of the deceased also devolves upon the heir, and on its erection he has to give another feast, or potlatch. It would seem that most of the legacy is spent in commemorative ceremonies, and that in Alaska, dead men's shoes are even less worth waiting for than in other countries.

The widow's lot is not a very happy one. Either the funeral baked meats are made to coldly set forth her marriage table, and in three days she becomes the wife of the unfortunate heir, or she refuses this doubtful boon and remains a solitary mourner for five long years.

Mourning etiquette is as elaborate as with the

Russian nobility. For the first four days, the bereaved one's hands are tied in a curious manner, so that she cannot move her fingers; for should she do so, her entire family would quickly be stricken with mortal illness. Her face is covered with black paint, through which the tears plough grewsome white furrows. To omit the mask would also result fatally to the widow's relations.

There is much fasting obligatory to the relict's condition. In fact one meal a day, towards evening, is considered by the conservative entirely sufficient. The dead man's family feed the widow, which is no more than decent, it will be admitted, since they have dispossessed her of all her worldly goods.

The greatest care is taken with her diet. She must not eat roots, or she will lose all decision of character, and become as a dead leaf, driven by each passing breeze. She must take care when she eats fish to avoid the head, or she will become so transparent that every one will know her thoughts. Berries, seaweed, salmon, and grease are safe articles of food, and to these the widow is commonly limited.

Small wonder that she generally insists upon an immediate remarriage!

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION, as it first exists among a people, is but a confused mass of odd vagaries and chaotic ideas resulting from the peculiar conditions of savage life and surroundings. Where Nature is grandest, imagination is most active and the spirit of investigation keenest.

This is noticeably true of the Thlinket. His surroundings are such as to make him thoughtful and questioning. The peculiar aspect of the country, its isolation and broad expanse of waters, the lofty mountains, dark forests, glaciers, volcanoes, ebbing and flowing tides, storms, thunder and lightning, the greater mysteries of life and death, — these all combine to impress him with a sense of his own loneliness and helplessness. He in vain seeks their explanation in his own experience; it can furnish no analogy. Slowly, against his will, he is driven to suspect the existence and power of certain invisible or disguised agencies, hitherto undreamed of. His imagination names these "spirits," and every unusual occurrence which

he can not otherwise account for, he explains to his own satisfaction by calling it the work of a spirit.

The "religion" of the Thlinkets, if such it could be termed, had once the nature of a feeble polytheism. The principal deity and creator of the world was Yehl, whose exploits will be given somewhat in detail in the chapter on folk-lore. He was their popular hero, and represented their ideal of wisdom and cunning. It mattered not that he was lazy and a glutton, or that he gained all his victories by fraud and knavery. Nor did it in the least conflict with their sense of the proprieties, that he should be a notorious thief and liar. They delighted in his cool impudence, his mad-cap pranks, the practical jokes he was continually playing on other spirits, and the miraculous means he employed to escape from the snares of his enemies.

Kanukh was the god of war, believed to be the progenitor of the Wolf family, a race of warriors. His progeny asserted, with some show of reason, that as he was born before Yehl, he was Yehl's superior.

The brother and sister Chetl and Ahgishanakhou were next best known. Chetl was said to hover about the earth in the form of a bird, revealing his presence only in the sweep of the tempest, when his gleaming eyes gave forth flashes of light, and

the thundering of his wings sent the echoes reverberating through the dark Alaska channels. Poor Ahgishanakhou was meanwhile buried in the crater of a volcano, left there by her brother to await his coming, and the day when she should no longer have to carry the weight of the world on her shoulders.

Mr. Dall says that beside these principal deities, the Thlinkets believed in an immense number of minor spirits, called "Yekh." These were divided into three classes: the khiyekh (spirits of the air), tahkiyekh (land spirits), and tekhiyekh (sea spirits). In different disguises, usually as beast or bird, they were wont to hover near the settlements of man.

Except in cases of extreme danger, the Thlinket seldom addressed a good spirit. When his canoe tossed up and down on the crest of the waves, driven by a furious wind, he half wailed, half chanted, "Goo soo, yekh el yekh, ah ya goo dak-ka-han" ("Good spirit, protect my canoe and stand by it"). But more commonly, as no danger was to be apprehended from powers already friendly, he made it his object to win the good-will of others.

His religion thus resolved itself into a modified form of devil worship. He employed every known means to propitiate the favor, or mercy, of

those hostilely disposed. In speaking of his dead relatives, he was careful to do so in terms of highest praise. He remembered their shades with food and offerings. If he were to be a shaman, he paid assiduous court to all dead doctors, flattered them without stint, and besought their friendship. So, too, with animals; he treated them with respect and deference. One in any way connected with totemic legends was regarded with little less than reverence.

The owl, for some reason, is generally regarded by suspicious people with dislike. Our Indian thought it a "witch-spirit" in disguise, the "Erl-king" who would carry off his little children. When his child was naughty, he said: "The owl will get you!" a threat which never failed to bring submission.

Life after death was supposed to be merely a continuation of former conditions. While the Thlinkets evidently did not expect the immediate resuscitation of their dead, as they made no effort to preserve their bodies, they yet vaguely believed it possible that the soul might one day return to earth, if not to inhabit its own body, to mingle again in another form with the world of human beings.

The spirit leaves, no one can say for how long a time. It has, perhaps, been called to another

dwelling-place ; in any event it is reasonable to suppose that it needs food, fire, and raiment. A savage cannot conceive of anything that is not visible and material. The spirit of the dead man is regarded as human, believed to engage in occupations,—warfare, hunting, and fishing,—to have the same needs and desires as the living, to suffer cold, hunger, thirst, and pain, to endure sickness and be liable even to a second death.

These ideas are not peculiar to the Thlinkets. Very many primitive people hold similar beliefs. Food is offered the corpse, and even pressed between its cold lips. Among some tribes, it is placed at regular intervals on the graves of the dead. The ancient Peruvians actually brought forth mummies from the tombs, set them in rows, and placed feasts before them. But while the Thlinkets did not originate this idea of the dead needing food, their method of providing it is most original. When the host at a feast, or potlatch, serves his guests with refreshments, he throws a small sample of each variety into the fireplace, and calls aloud the names of his dead ancestors and relatives. In some mysterious way the food goes to spirit-land. Those whose names are called share the good things with the living, the effect being the same as though they were presented direct with the entire collation.

Cremation, as said before, is believed to insure warmth to the soul. A man's personal effects and valuables were in former times burned with the body, that the spirit might enjoy opulence and distinction. For the same reason, when a man of rank died one or more slaves were hurried off to wait on him.

The manner of one's death decided the question where his soul should spend its after existence. If the body died as the result of illness, the soul travelled through a dense forest and across a river to a big city. Every step of the way was fraught with hardship and danger. The friends of a dying man surrounded his bedside, drew a doleful picture of the difficulties his soul might expect to encounter, and warned him to keep up good courage and a sharp lookout. After his death, before cremating him, they wrapped his body in warm blankets, placed boots or fur-lined moccasins on his feet, and provided him with gun and ammunition or other defensive weapon, either burning them or leaving them at the grave.

How did the Indians learn so much of this veiled future? From certain good-natured spirits who came back all the way from spirit-land to bring them tidings. Miracles happened more frequently long ago than in these matter-of-fact days of our own generation. The soul of one Mutstak,

it is claimed, left the body for two whole days, then returned to give the world this strange story :

"The path to the river led over a steep hill choked with briars and devil's club. Without thick shoes and stockings I could not have made my way at all. Beasts of the forest attacked me on every side, but my war paint and brave knife soon frightened them away. I reached the river and shouted with all my might. A boatman responded to my call, and in a few minutes appeared and conveyed me across the stream to spirit-land.

"In great haste I set out to find my uncle. To my surprise, he did not seem glad to see me ; looked at me sorrowfully, and I almost thought reproachfully, and said : —

"' My nephew, what has brought you here? Are you hungry? Do not eat, I beg of you ! Hurry back, as fast as ever you can, to the good home you have left ! '

"I turned my back on him, somewhat indignant, and proceeded alone to make the rounds of the village. There were four rows of houses, I found, and those longest dead lived in the last tier. Before each row I dropped a blanket as I passed. Such misery I never dreamed of. Spirit-land is full of unhappy ones ! Each house had its fire-place, but only those whose bodies had been burned could enjoy their warmth. Several souls sat in

one corner of a great, square room, shivering with cold. 'Why don't you draw nearer the fire?' I asked. 'We can't,' they answered mournfully; 'our bodies were never burned.'

"Other poor souls were starving. 'Return home,' they begged me, — 'return and tell our people how we suffer through their carelessness. They have given us no food this entire year.'

"Others again had scarcely any clothing. 'Our people are to blame,' they complained, with great bitterness. 'They have neglected to remember us with blankets.'

"My mother's spirit came to me, and said, 'You have a great mission. Go home and tell the Indians what your experience has taught you. Give them also this message from me: It is not enough to provide the spirits with food; they are thirsty, and a bottle or dish of water should be buried by the funeral pyre.

"Also say to them that when a dead body lies in a house where there is a child, unless they want another death in the family, they should split the end of a small stick, fill it with charcoal, and place it by the child's bed with the split end pointing toward spirit-land. Or, better still, tell them to hang a row of halibut hooks along the side of the room. Spirits are afraid of halibut hooks.'

"So, one by one, they came to me bringing their

messages. They were so anxious that I should leave, that they commenced beating me and clubbing me, until I was glad to run away."

Impossible as this story is, its teachings have become a part of the Indian's creed. We can do no better than to accept Mr. Spencer's theory, that the savage argues from a belief that all things, animate and inanimate, have their doubles. Things are constantly becoming visible, and then vanishing. So when a man dreams, having no conception of mind, he regards the dream as a series of actual occurrences. He accepts the facts as they stand, without any thought of their inconsistencies, and believes that it is his other self which has been away during sleep and come back again. In a swoon, or trance, this other self stays away longer, it may be for several days; and when it returns, the friends gather round him and listen with breathless interest to the tale of its adventures.

In another instance, it was a woman who returned to life for the second time. The poor creature was so poverty-stricken that her friends did not take the trouble to decently prepare her body for burial. She described the terrible sufferings experienced by her spirit in its fruitless attempts to reach spirit-land, and exacted a promise from her friends that when she should die again, they would clothe her body in gloves, shoes, and stockings.

The soul of a certain Sitkan is said three times to have quitted its body. In spiritual matters he is considered an authority. In the main, however, his statements agree with those of Mutstak.

Those spirits whose friends do not remember them yearly with food are starving; and little children live on the bark of trees. Those whose bodies were not cremated, dare not approach a fireplace. Political and industrial conditions are the same as on earth. Each spirit follows a chosen calling, the same he pursued when living. The one who has the greatest number of blankets and slaves ranks as chief over the others. White people are plentiful, but occupy a very inferior position. They wander about in cotton sheets of thin, slazy night-gowns, and are cold and hungry the whole time.

As the death of one of any prominence is followed by a potlatch in which the dead are supposed to be benefited, the spirits presumably favor a high mortality rate. It would be quite in keeping with their artful natures that they should try to lure away souls. Thus the Indian argues, saying, half fearfully, half angrily:—

“Curse the spirits! Why can they not leave us alone? They have plenty of white people over there. Why try to coax away more Indians?”

To this mythical spirit city went only the souls

of those who died natural deaths. One killed in war, or murdered, mounted by an invisible stairway to the sky. An Indian stood guard at the foot of the stairway, and demanded of each newcomer who approached: "Why were you killed?" If he answered, "I was murdered," or "I was killed in battle," he was allowed to pass. But if he admitted being killed because he was a witch, or a thief, this Saint Peter of the Indian heaven sternly made reply: "No thieves or witches are wanted here. Your place is down below;" and the rejected spirit had to pass through a deep hole in the earth to an underground Hades.

A murderer, if he died a natural death, went to the big city; a violent death, into the air. A red cloud in the sky was interpreted to mean that war, or murder, was taking place in that direction. Heavenly spirits were rejoicing over the arrival of recruits, and the cloud was the red blanket of an Indian dancing a jubilee. The people there worked and amused themselves after the manner of earthly folk.

The drowned were carried off to the woods by land-otters. In time they became kash-ta-ka (land-otters), had the appearance of animals, and lived as such. A cut, it was said, would restore them to their senses; and the Indian who had lost a friend placed knives and spikes near the spots he thought might be visited.

Supposing a soul grew weary of spirit-land, it was at liberty to leave. This it often did, entering the body of a new-born babe, the offspring, perhaps, of a near relation to whom it was particularly friendly in life. A birthmark was sure evidence of such occupancy. A foolish, half-witted child was believed possessed by a restless wanderer from the skies. To identify it, the parents sometimes summoned the medicine-doctor, who pretended to give the child a very thorough examination, and thus translate its meaningless prattle, "I am the spirit of my uncle. If the woman who has borne me is not kind to me, back I go to spirit-land."

These beliefs have been, most of them, spoken of in the past tense. One might use the present and not convey a very wrong impression. Old people are everywhere slow to grasp new ideas; while the younger Thlinkets are naturally so confused by the conflict of the old and the new that they have no coherent creed. Ask a mission boy the origin of his people, and he will very likely answer you, as one did us: that originally all the world spoke Thlinket; that when the nations of the earth built the tower of Babel, his tribe were the only ones to reach the top; that the Lord confounded the tongues of the others, and they alone retained the original speech.

In common with most other people, the Thlin-

kets have their tradition of the flood. When it occurred no one knows, probably not long ago, for traces of it are said to still exist.

The waters rose very deliberately. The Indians had abundance of time to retreat to high land and build themselves rafts. When the water surrounded them, they embarked, taking with them a few faithful dogs. Bears and other animals swam after them, but were driven away. For a long time the waters continued to rise, until only the lofty peaks of St. Elias and Wrangel were visible. The women wove ropes out of bark ; and, when the wind drove their rafts toward these peaks, they fastened them there. These ropes are said to have been seen recently, and also the stone houses which the Indians built when the waters went down.

Another version of this popular story has it that the people of the world escaped drowning by taking refuge in a floating building. When the waters subsided, the building broke in two, and in one half were saved those whose descendants spoke Thlinket, and in the other those whose progeny spoke different dialects.

CHAPTER XIV

THE artistic genius of these northern tribes excited the wonder of the first explorers, and is scarcely less a source of admiration to the tourist of to-day. Out of the rawest material, and with tools few and primitive, they manage most admirable effects both in color and relief. Wood-carving is, not unnaturally, their highest and best art. In this the Haidas of Queen Charlotte Islands are supposed to excel the other tribes; but our Thlinkets follow them very closely. What remains of the old-style houses bears striking witness to their love of decoration and ability to carry out ideas in design.

The corner-posts, the lintels, gables, and frequently the whole front of the house was covered with carvings, naïve yet significant, disclosing to the minds of the inhabitants a series of memorable events in their family history.

All the older households possess richly carved chests, treasure-boxes, dishes, bowls, spoons, to fire the heart of the collector. The chests, which are used for the stowing away of ceremonial robes, furs,

and ornaments, are made of thin, wide cedar boards. A single piece sometimes furnishes the ends and sides, the wood being bent in four right angles by steam or boiling water. More commonly, they are in two pieces, with the opposite sides and ends pegged together, or neatly dove-tailed. The lid is bevelled to fit the chest, and the whole is covered with conventionalized ravens, or bears, or whatever animal rules the destiny of the property owner. Similar chests, lesser in size, are, or were, used to contain the ashes of the dead. Both carving and painting are employed in ornamentation, and are even combined, as the Japanese combine painting and embroidery, the brush finishing the design where it becomes too intricate or too difficult for the needle.

The so-called treasure-chests are not used for treasures at all, but for food, dried fish, sea-weed, and oil, and especially for the transportation of these dainties. They are smaller and heavier than the household chests, and, although handsomely carved, are apt to be grease-soaked and ill-smelling beyond redemption.

On their dishes and household utensils the Indians have always lavished skill and ingenuity. Bowls, platters, and spoons were handed down from one generation to another, and were as piously cherished as a set of old blue in New England.

But of late the vogue of ironstone and earthenware has entered Alaska, and soon the old carved dishes will all be in the hands of collectors.

The most unpretentious are cut from spruce-wood, and inlaid with the rainbow-hued abaloni, or adorned with the inevitable totem, in etching or high relief. Sometimes the dish is an actual graven image of a beaver, or a sea-otter, with gleaming teeth and eyes of haliotis, and a hollowed body for the food. But ordinarily they are simple bowls, tub or boat shaped. The finest material used is the horn of the mountain goat or sheep. These animals are found in the loftiest and most difficult mountains of the mainland. They are not hard to shoot after the climbing has been accomplished, and, from time immemorial, have been pursued by Thlinket hunters. They are, in fact, a valuable source of revenue; as the Chilkats need the goats' wool for their famous blankets, and the Southern and Island tribes have to obtain by trade what horns they need for dishes.

Most dearly treasured are the wooden and especially the horn spoons. No tourist leaves Alaska quite satisfied with himself unless he carries away at least one of these. But "put money in thy purse," and plenty of money too, if you hope to obtain a really good specimen; for the Thlinket values his creations highly, and has, moreover, im-

bibed the delusion of the European shop-keeper, that every traveller is the president of the First National Bank of his own town. Undoubtedly there is a vast amount of patient labor contained in the evolution of a curled and twisted horn into a shapely spoon; long steaming and straightening, and much slow cutting and hollowing out make the task a long and difficult one. A single horn suffices for a good-sized spoon; but sometimes the bowl is made from the sheep's horn, while that of the goat is used for the handle, the two pieces being joined and riveted with copper. All the imagination of the artist is employed in the ornamentation. The bowl is etched with strange figures, legendary, poetic, or totemic; the brightest shells are sought for inlaying; the most expert knife is intrusted with the carving on the handle. One frequently finds simple designs, and even unornamented surfaces, but the shape and curve is always admirable. Each spoon is, as far as it is carried, a work of art. The poorest are made of wood, often elaborately carved and inlaid with abaloni, haliotis, and copper. Whale and other bone are also utilized. They are all rather large, none being smaller than a large dessert spoon, while the great ones are from fifteen to twenty inches long, and will hold a quart of oil.

They are not very promising objects as they

come from the hands of their first owners. Caked with the dirt and rancid oil of generations, they need many soakings and scrubblings to prepare them for the beautiful high polish which is their honorable due. First scraped as thin as possible with glass and sand-paper, and afterwards rubbed with jeweller's polish and the hand of the operator, the result is an exquisitely brilliant surface, transparent as amber.

Hunting and fishing implements are also carved, as we have noted, with the image of the animal to whose use they are dedicated. The humblest of building tools bears the "hall-mark" of totemism.

Jewelry naturally follows the universal inspiration. Buy the oldest and dirtiest bracelets you can find, if you buy bracelets, as you will surely be tempted to do. They will be etched with the characteristic figures of the ancient animal deities, and the work will be good because it is sincere, because it is an expression of temperament, of race. Nowadays bracelets are made to sell. The old designs are being replaced by American flags, E Pluribus Unum eagles, clasped hands, and other borrowed atrocities. They might as well come from New Jersey!

Silver is far from being a debased metal in Alaska. It is universally preferred to gold for jewelry, and outranks even the once royally regarded copper.

Several well-known localities in the Chilkat country yield quantities of virgin copper; and, further back than the advent of the white men, the Indians mined and worked in it. Besides its use in the arts, it was valued in a symbolic way. Plates were made of it, shield-like in form, about a quarter of an inch thick, and from two to three feet long by twenty inches wide. Two deep grooves, something like the letter T, were hollowed out on one side, and the owner's family arms were etched or otherwise added. The plate was slightly thicker at the edges than in the middle, and the last test of perfection required that the sound given forth when the metal was struck should be dull, and not sharp or ringing. Nine slaves, or thirty sea-otter skins, purchased only a single one of these plates, and if the copper had been presented to its owner by some one of importance, if many totemic emblems covered it, or if its age was great, the value was much increased.

Coppers had no definite use, but were evidences of wealth and greatness, and were brought forth at marriages and other family episodes with the rest of the display.

Some of the most interesting bits of native carving are seen in the rattles, charms, masks, and other paraphernalia of the shamans. The fancy, rioting through gloomy chambers of imagery, ghosts,

demons, and witches, expressed itself in these symbols of mystic power; and the result is often shudderingly grotesque, always hideous.

Painting is a much simpler and less highly developed art than carving. Few colors are used, the favorite ones being red, black, and bright green. They are obtained from charcoal, ochres, and the juices of herbs ground in stone mortars, mixed with oil or a compound of fish-eggs and cedar bark to make them adhere. Brushes are made of vegetable fibre, or bristles, ingeniously inserted into the split end of a wooden handle, and made fast by cord wrappings.

The Thlinkets, unlike most of the other Alaska tribes, do not generally practise tattooing; but in their dances and ceremonies they paint their faces in strange designs. Elsewhere, painting is used as is carving, for decorative purposes solely. Legends are sometimes pictured in a vague sort of a way; but it is rare to find any attempt at delineating every-day, domestic life or habits, as the Egyptians, for instance, were so fond of doing.

If the southern Indians are conceded the palm as sculptors, the northern people, and especially the Chilkats, have always been acknowledged the finest weavers, and the deftest workers in basketry and beading. The costly Chilkat blankets already described are their most ambitious production.

Beside these, they work skilfully in furs and skins, making robes, shirts, and other garments of thoroughly tanned skins, trimming and bordering the edges and seams with fringes of the slit skin. Rich and elegant blankets are made of different furs tastefully combined, — the fox or beaver with the lynx, ermine with sea-otter, black with white seal. In beading, they equal any of the tribes of plains Indians.

They are pre-eminent in basket and straw weaving. In basketry, two methods are followed: "twining" and "coiling." The first is the simpler and the more commonly employed, it consisting of the plain twining of two woof strands around several warp strands. The conical hats are woven in this manner, as are also the basketed flasks and bottles vended in the streets and curio shops.

The materials used are coarse native grass or vegetable fibre, preferably that obtained from the roots of the yellow cedar; and the baskets are so closely woven as to be in many cases quite watertight. Of old, all baskets were thus made, since it was necessary to use them in cooking, and for carrying water.

The geometrical figures into which the different colors are woven are decidedly pleasing. The original tones were dim reds and browns, from vegetable dyes. The modern products are colored

with anilines, and show brilliant greens, purples, and vermilions.

The coiling process consists of sewing a number of straight rods into a mat of the required shape, which answers for the bottom of the basket. Rushes or splints are coiled firmly over this framework, and ornamented with straw or bark applique, neatly sewn.

Every shape and size are to be found, from great cylinders two feet in diameter to fancy little trinkets with double covers, filled with shot or small pebbles which rattle when the basket is handled.

Several varieties of mats are manufactured ; some large and coarse from rough bark, and used for tents when travelling, or covers for canoes and cargoes. In early days these same mats answered for sails. Finer ones of the inner bark of the cedar served as bedding, and as seats for chiefs and other dignitaries. The best of these mats, like the baskets, are made in varied hues, and the patterns are often very well conceived.

The northwestern tribes are passionately fond of music. They have fairly good voices as a rule, and take every opportunity to join them in choruses. All ceremonies, trades, and social gatherings are thus enlivened. It cannot be said that much melody or any harmony is the result of so

much good aspiration ; but they have an excellent conception of time, and the performance is not destitute of character and expression. We take from Dixon's "Voyages" an old trading song of the Sitkas, which will give a good idea of native music.

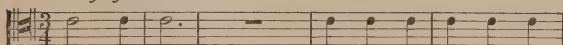
Musical instruments were limited to drums, rattles, and whistles. The drums were simple contrivances of sheepskin stretched over a wide hoop, and were beaten with a single padded stick.

There were a great variety of whistles, ranging from a hollowed stick with a bladder attached, like those distressing India-rubber "squawkers" small boys delight in, to a veritable pipe o' Pan. Some had double mouthpieces and a bellows to furnish the wind, some a series of vibrating reeds ; an approach to the trumpet was attained, and the flageolet was not uncommon. None gave more than three notes. Of rattles, there was even greater variety. The commonest consisted of two pieces of cedar wood, joined to make a hollow chamber, and furnished with a handful of small pebbles. A snapping form was popular for occasions of mere amusement or recreation, — "cultus" dances. These were in the image of some animal's head, with immensely large teeth which could be snapped together by means of a string. The Indians were adepts in this sort of mechanical

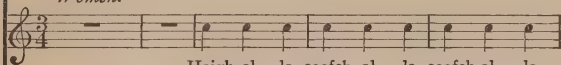
The Thlinkets of Southeastern Alaska 175

(Previous to commencing trade.)

Chief of the Tribe.

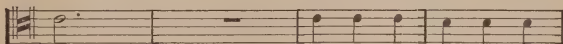
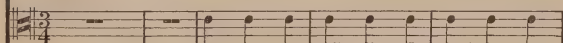


Al - la coofch, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh,
Women.

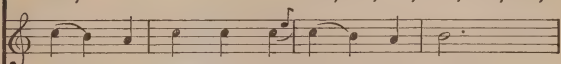


Men.

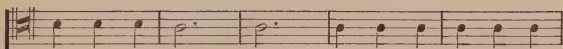
Haigh al - la coofch al - la coofch al - la



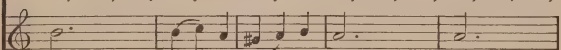
hoh, Hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh,



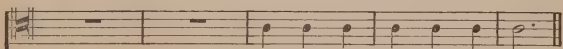
haigh ha, Haigh, haigh, haigh, haigh, hah haigh,



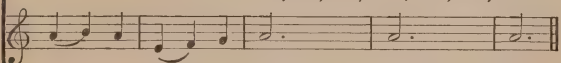
hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh,



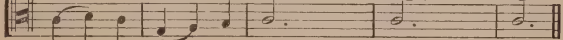
haigh, haigh ha, haigh ha, haigh, haigh,



hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh.



haigh ha, haigh ha, haigh, haigh, haigh.



device. They made masks in which the eyes rolled, and the teeth grinned and ground themselves horribly.

None of these instruments were used separately from singing or dancing. Of instrumental music, they seem to have had no comprehension ; but its value as an accompaniment was fully appreciated.

CHAPTER XV

“**L**ET me sing the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws,” cried the poet. By which he meant, “Let me into the heart of my fellow beings, where I shall find out the truth of their lives, their ideas, and the motives by which they rule themselves.” In other words, it is in the songs, the traditions, the folk-lore of a people that we get the most intimate and the most unerring view of them.

The Thlinkets have scarcely passed that stage of growth in which all objects, animate and inanimate, are held to be replete with conscious life. To them beasts and birds, sun and stars, all the elements of Nature, live and are possessed of the same thoughts, needs, and passions as men and women, — only they are generally more cunning and more powerful than human beings.

Around the totems cluster a wealth of tradition. The supposed progenitors of the different clans are the heroes of innumerable adventures. The founder of a clan is a beast, or a creature half beast and

half man. No repugnance to a marriage between man and the lower animals exists, at least, not when viewed as an abstract proposition, or as something which once happened. One Thlinket fairy story tells of a maiden wedded to a bear; others where she marries a devil-fish, a wolf, a dog, a frog, or a salmon. In another instance, it is an Indian man united to a female bear.

The curious feature of such alliances is that the animal seems to cast some kind of a spell over the man; to him the beast appears to be human like himself.

If it be marvelled that such grotesque and even revolting vagaries of imagination should occur to a people, we need only be reminded that the savage brain actually invents nothing by itself. As a matter of fact, it is incapable of pure imagination. The savage accepts freely on authority; his credulity is unbounded, and the slightest evidence is to him unquestionable proof. But he has no spontaneous conceptions of his own.

The idea of animal progenitors is easily traced; all the world over we find men with animal nicknames. In many tribes the chiefs are spoken of as lions, — the bravest and kingliest creature which the savage is able to find as a comparison. In old Egypt the chiefs were called bulls, — “Horus, conquering bull.” A man swift of foot is called

fox, or bird ; one full of prowess may be known as the tiger.

In naming children, an object which the mother noticed before or soon after the birth, or perhaps an event which took place at the time of birth, furnishes a basis for the name. For instance, a dog howled, or a wolf broke the thicket, — the child is called dog or wolf. Some incident of early life, as the slaying of a beast, may serve later as a pretext for changing the name.

A savage hears his ancestors spoken of by their nicknames. It is extremely difficult, well-nigh impossible, for him to discriminate between metaphor and fact ; he easily comes to think of himself as descended from the real animal.

We must not lose sight of the utter inadequacy of primitive speech to express shades of meaning. Rarely is it sufficiently full to allow of any meaning without the help of gestures and facial contortions. Some tribes are unable to converse in the dark, even among their own people. Thlinket speech is not quite that barren now, but must have been a few generations back. Even now, the language boasts a vocabulary of less than one thousand words. This furnishes another explanation of the confusion of fact and fancy.

So, all through this folk-lore, we find beasts and men meeting on equal terms, talking, fighting,

matching wits, loving, marrying, and mingling as man and man. Dozens of stories have for their motive a disrespectful word spoken of an animal, and the vengeance which swiftly followed.

But the greatest wealth of legend clusters round the name of Yehl.

Yehl is the creator of the world. He made the Indian as well as all beasts, birds, and creatures of the sea. He gave the world light, fire, and water. His adventures would fill a volume. In a thousand and one nights they could not all be told.

He is called the Raven, because his principal exploits were performed under that disguise. "One day a large bird appeared before him, having a long tail like a magpie, and a long, glittering bill as of metal; the name of the bird was Kutzghatushl, or 'Crane that flies to heaven.' Yehl shot and skinned the bird, and whenever he wished to fly clothed himself in the skin."

He existed before he was born of woman, can never grow old, and will never die. As is the case with most theological personages, his history is somewhat involved. He is the child of an Indian woman, and yet it is claimed that he created mankind.

According to tradition, there existed, once upon a time, a cruel chief who was so jealous of his wife that he kept her, not in a pumpkin-shell,

because pumpkins don't grow in Alaska, but in a box which was suspended in the air near the ceiling. The chieftain had one sister, who was the mother of two boys. These boys the cruel uncle slew, because he feared that they would steal away his wife when they became men.

It will be remembered that a man's wife, on his decease, falls to his nephew; and there is nothing in Thlinket morals which would assure immunity from an anticipation, on the nephew's part, of his future legacy.

The unhappy sister of the chieftain fled to a lonely spot, and bewailed the loss of her little sons. Soon appeared to her a crane; she thought him a man, but he was actually a crane. He inquired the cause of her distress, and, on being enlightened, sympathized with her greatly. He directed her to pick up a smooth round pebble from the beach, heat it in the fire, and swallow it. This she did, and in nine months another son was born to her, and this son was Yehl. She concealed the child for some time, for she did not wish him slain. In ten days, however, for he grew rapidly, he attained the full stature of a man. She gave him bow and arrows, and taught him to shoot unerringly. Then she concealed his birth no longer. The chief, her brother, congratulated her warmly, but not any more sincerely than one would imagine. He pre-

tended friendship with his nephew in order to get more opportunities for killing him. He took the youth fishing, and capsized the canoe. But Yehl had on his diver's skin, and calmly walked along the bottom of the sea to the shore.

Next, the uncle contrived to fasten the marvelous one up in an unfinished canoe in the depths of the woods. Soon after he had disappeared, full of joy, Yehl stretched his arms; the canoe fell to pieces, and its occupant put it together and carried it home.

Many similar attempts at murder failing, the chieftain, in despair, went off hunting, leaving Yehl in the house. Of course the first thing he did was to cut the rope which suspended the pumpkin-shell, — that is, the box. As he lifted the beautiful prisoner, two little birds flew from under her arms and darted out the door. Yehl knew that they were flying directly to tell his uncle; and quickly the enraged husband did come rushing in, exclaiming, as he pointed furiously to the sea: "Let the tides come up now!"

Higher and higher rose the tides, until the house was flooded. But Yehl was not to be drowned. He adeptly turned himself into a crow, and flew up into the sky, where he hung with his bill until the floods subsided. Then he let go his hold and dropped to the ground, landing on a bed of sea-

weed. He summoned a sea-otter, and sent him to the bottom of the ocean after some sand. Out of this Yehl made the earth.

Do not allow yourself to be confused by this apparent anachronism.

The earth was barren of vegetation ; but Yehl soon caused trees to grow and plants to spring up. This he accomplished by means of a bit of chewed sea-weed spat forth on the sand. Fishes and animals were next called into existence, and then man was created.

Man was originally made from a stone, but Yehl was not satisfied with his work. A stone man was a heavy and an ungraceful object ; besides it was a too powerful one. The gods have ever been afraid of man's becoming too strong and too long-lived. So Yehl disposed of his first man somehow, and made another out of a stick of wood. This was light and active ; and Yehl was so pleased with him that he made a woman out of the same material.

There is a poetic legend that man was made finally from a leaf, and woman from a strawberry blossom. "Sugar and spice and everything nice," as we used to sing of our small girl selves.

The history of Yehl is one long chronicle of thrilling adventures. He delighted in performing miracles, not, indeed, because he loved to benefit

his people, but because of a natural propensity for meddling.

At this early period all the fire in the world was hidden on an island. The raven flew to the place and carried off a burning brand; but before he could reach the shore, the brand was so far consumed that it scorched his beak. He let it drop; the sparks and embers flew far, and fell upon sticks and stones, from which lodging it is easy to coax flame by merely rubbing two bits together, as all men know.

The fresh water of the world was likewise "cornered" by a monopolist magician whose name was Kanukh. The better to protect his treasure, which was all contained in one huge well, the magician built his house directly over the opening. Yehl managed to allure Kanukh from the house, and, in his absence, had time to drink one long draught from the well. Kanukh returned to witness the bold robbery, and to see the robber soar victoriously upwards to the chimney-hole. Furious at being outwitted, he kindled a roaring fire in the fireplace. Yehl escaped, but his pure white feathers were blackened by the soot and smoke, and since that time the color of the raven has been a glossy black. As he flew over the land drops of water fell from his beak, the large ones producing lakes and rivers, the small ones springs and little brooks.

To give the world light, he transformed himself into a spruce-needle, and concealed himself in the drinking-cup of the princess whose father owned the sun, moon, and stars. She swallowed the needle, and in due time a son was born to her, which son was Yehl himself. Thus he gained access to the jealously guarded treasures of the household, and, stealing them, he flew (as a raven, again) to the sky, where he lodged the light-giving objects. People were at first terrified, for they had known nothing but darkness heretofore; but they soon accustomed themselves to the new conditions, and came to be thankful for the boon of light. As for Yehl, his doings thenceforth became shrouded in mystery.

All the phenomena of Nature are accounted for thus fantastically. The crater of Mount Edgecombe was made by the weight of Ahgishanakhou, the Thunder-bird's sister, who sat on the mountain and held the world on her shoulders. Under her weight the centre of the mountain slowly sank; and when Ahgishanakhou reached the bottom, she cleared a spot and went to housekeeping. When the mountain smokes, the Indians know that the Thunder-bird's sister is building her fire.

The Muir glacier was made in a no less remarkable manner. Two young girls were confined in a little house south of the glacier. Their clothes

becoming soiled, they took them off and washed them. But, strangely enough, although they waited a long time, the garments would not dry. In despair, the girls cried out, "Come, North Wind, please come quickly and dry our clothes!"

And the north wind came with such characteristic energy that it froze all the streams on the way. The Indians, frightened out of their senses to see this mass of rushing ice, demanded the cause, and, learning of the girls' rash invocation of the powers of air, seized them and threw them in the glacier's path. It stopped, and ever since has remained motionless, slowly crumbling away.

CHAPTER XVI

THE foregoing pages have dealt largely with customs and conditions which, if not quite of the past, are rapidly passing away.

In the second part of "Faust" occurs an incident almost trivial in itself, and in its place in the drama not a little puzzling. Philemon and Baucis, a venerable couple, are living out their years in the humble cottage in which they first began housekeeping. Small and mean as it is, they love it, and ask for no better; so when the king wishes to purchase for an astronomical observatory the height on which it stands, they simply but firmly decline to sell. The king offers them a good price, and a much better house in exchange; but they cling to their ancient walls, and refuse to leave. There seems to be no other place in all the kingdom so well adapted for the purposes of the observatory; and, after every argument is exhausted, the king sends his messengers to forcibly remove the obstinate old people to the new home he has provided for them. The messengers, however, are over-zealous. They burn the cottage and the ad-

joining chapel, and poor old Philemon and Baucis die of grief and terror.

One feels very sorry for them, and indignant at the stupid and unnecessary cruelty of the king's servants. But there is no doubt of the equity of the original proceeding. Civilization moves on infinitely and irresistibly, and every nation and every individual in the path of her mighty march must either move with her or be trampled upon.

It is the fault of her emissaries who so badly execute her designs that the first coming of civilization to barbarous peoples is always attended with suffering and misfortune.

It is true that the Thlinkets have benefited much, and have been greatly enlightened since the advent of the white man. They no longer raise their dwellings over the decaying bodies of slaughtered slaves; the dreaded shaman's pointing finger has now less power to bring torture and death to the innocent. They have learned to keep out smoke as well as cold from their houses, have absorbed a few ideas of cleanliness and hygiene, and are beginning to appreciate the advantage of a school education.

On the other hand, the worst vices of the white man have found ground, and are flourishing like the Russian thistle in the farmer's fields. Drunkenness, gambling,—all the foulest crimes of human-

ity, with the madness and disease which are attendant, are there, and seem to spread and to increase faster than the missionaries or the schools.

The fact that traders and individuals are forbidden by law to sell, barter, or give away intoxicating drink in Alaska has about as much influence on the statistics of intemperance in the Territory as have the prohibition statutes in Kansas and Iowa. The Indian will drink anything containing alcohol, and a very little liquor suffices to utterly brutalize and degrade him. The appetite once formed, there seems to be no salvation for him; it is like the tiger which has tasted human flesh. He will pay any price, make any sacrifice, to satisfy his craving, run even the risk of imprisonment for maintaining a private distillery.

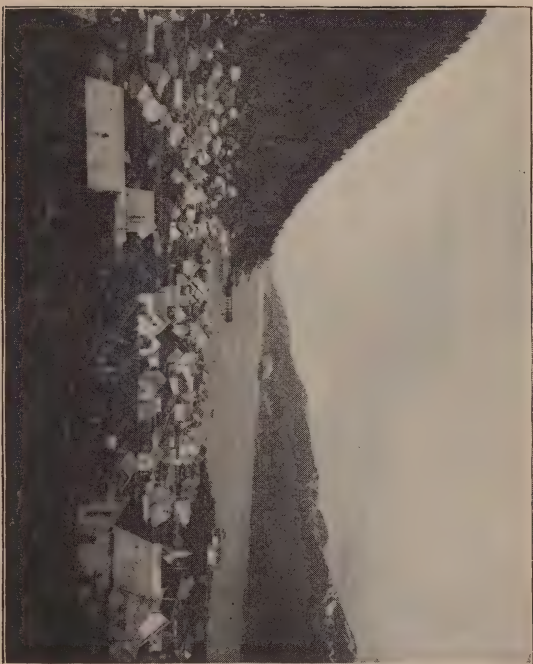
That there is so much drunkenness among the natives is not the fault of the government, or of the present population of Alaska. Every effort is made to enforce the laws where they apply to the Indian; but it is manifestly impossible, in such a sparsely settled country, to entirely prevent smuggling and illicit traffic.

A few months ago, a small schooner from British Columbia managed to elude the vigilance of the officials, and, unnoticed, made a landing at one of the larger villages in Chilkat Inlet. The cargo, whiskey of the rawest, cheapest kind, was quickly

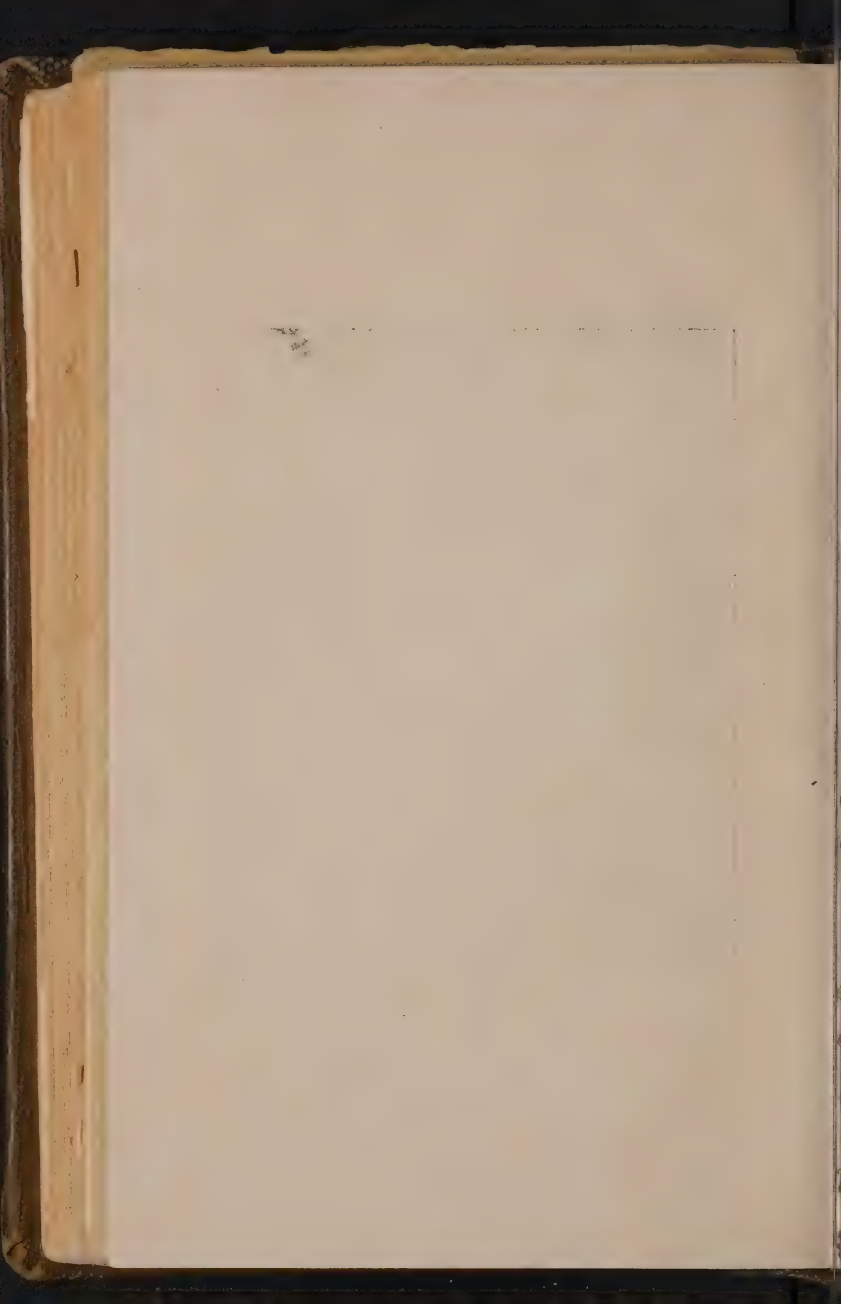
disposed of, and the village immediately became a pandemonium of drunkenness. Men and women alike joined in the orgy. The climax was a free fight in which several lives were sacrificed; and then the crowd began to clamor for the blood of the white men of the neighborhood. Help was summoned from Juneau; and, had it not promptly arrived, a shocking massacre might have taken place.

So with debauchery of every description, the white man found apt pupils in the Indians. Virtue with them was always more or less a marketable commodity; but the condition of affairs to-day is infinitely worse than it was before they came under the influence of the white man. It may be asked if the Russians who preceded us are not responsible for some part of the present demoralization. For part, undoubtedly, but our government must bear its share of blame. More mischief was done in those first years of military misrule, and in the subsequent period of no rule at all, than can ever be estimated, perhaps than can ever be remedied.

Dissipation and disease have materially reduced the population of Alaska, but with what is left, the Territorial government and the schools are doing good work. Much more might be accomplished if the Governor had completer authority. For example: under naval rule the Indians were com-



JUNEAU



pelled to keep their houses and streets in tolerably good condition. Each house in the Sitka ranch was numbered, and the owner required once in so often to give it a coat of whitewash. An inspector paid regular visits, and any one found keeping a dirty or disorderly establishment was promptly fined. No punishment appeals to a Thlinket so directly as a fine; it strikes the very tenderest spot, — his avarice. If the present government had power to compel cleanliness from the natives, their condition would be vastly improved. They are decidedly better off, it is true, than they were a few years ago; but their indifference to the stench of decaying animal and vegetable matter makes them rather poor judges of neatness or order, as an abstract proposition.

In Sitka, their highest point of civilization is reached. Most of the old-style houses have been replaced by ordinary frame-dwellings, two and three stories in height, ugly enough, but well lighted and ventilated, and the best of them partitioned off into good-sized, comfortable rooms.

The well-to-do furnish their houses with tables, chairs, bedroom-sets, lamps, and mirrors bought at closing-out sales of departing naval officers or government officials. The finest side-board in Sitka is owned by an Indian. He uses it as a clothes-press and cupboard. This same In-

dian's little grand-daughter is the proud owner of twenty-five dolls, — "store" dolls too, all of them, and elaborately provided with wardrobes. As for Princess Thom, she is an aristocrat of aristocrats. Only recently she tore down her old house, which we thought quite palatial, and has built a much larger and finer one. The old one had red and blue glass in the front door, oilcloth on the floors, centre-tables, cane-seated chairs, and a hanging-lamp with glass pendants in the parlor. Under the clock hung a blue duster, apparently regarded as purely ornamental, since there was no evidence of its ever having been used. In the Princess's bed-chamber, an engraving of one of Raphael's Holy Families held honorable place.

Two or three winters ago the Princess gave a Sitka merchant an order for a seal-plush coat. It arrived in due time, but, after inspecting carefully and trying it on, the critical old lady decided that the sleeves were not of the fashionable high cut, and declined to accept it!

These are exceptions. Not all the natives have expensive furniture and fine clothes. Very few, indeed perhaps none outside the largest towns, dream of such luxury; still there is no reason why they should not all be prosperous in time, for there is abundance of work for those who are ready to do it properly. The constantly increasing

tourist-travel during the summer has created a demand at all the steamer ports for hammered silver-ware, basket-work, and various curios of native manufacture which they are enabled to sell at almost any price. In this way large sums of money are often realized.

The greatest, the most immediate need of native Alaska is medical and sanitary assistance. Under the old Russian rule hospitals were maintained at Sitka, Kadiak, Unalaska, and Hot Springs. Up to 1860, 14,550 patients were cared for, and of these only a small number proved fatal cases. The sulphur hot springs, eighteen miles from Sitka, is a most favorable spot for a government hospital. The distance would be of small moment to the Indians, who have long been accustomed to moving their sick in canoes to consult famous medicine-men or to test the virtues of different springs and baths. But wherever it be located, a hospital and a free dispensary are desperately needed, and all cases of sickness should be required by law to be reported to the officers in charge. An inspector should be appointed whose duty it would be to make daily investigation of the ranch and its population. The Indians are childishy ignorant of the simplest laws of health, and indeed are so accustomed to suffering that they do not realize their own wretched condition.

This state of things at home bears hard on the children, who leave the schools with ideas of a higher life, but without character enough to carry out those ideas. It is very sad and very discouraging, but not at all astonishing, that so many of the mission graduates suffer a moral relapse as soon as the personal guidance of their teachers is withdrawn from them.

Neither is it surprising that the missionaries have so little influence with the older people.

It is a commonly admitted fact that development and the power of assimilating knowledge ceases much earlier in the lower races than in the highly civilized. In youth, the barbarian, even the savage, is generally quite as quick-witted and intelligent as a European child of the same age. Philanthropists observe this, and leap to the conclusion that all that "the heathen" needs is a chance of enlightenment. As a matter of fact, in a very few years, at adolescence in the lowest races, the brain becomes dulled, inactive, and retrogression both of body and mind is rapid; just as the ape, which approaches the human type in its first years, recedes and becomes more brutal, mentally and physically, when full grown. This is true, in a much less marked degree, of civilized man. Precocity is not to be confounded with intelligence; and even of true intelligence we must



PRESBYTERIAN MISSION, SITKA

not expect too much. Information, knowledge itself, is but the seed-grain of wisdom. The actual structure of the brain must change before a hitherto unrecognized truth can become so much a part of it as to have an influence upon the character and the general view. Education, in the highest sense of the word, is simply growth ; and for that we have always to wait.

The most advanced school for Indians is located at Sitka, and is supported by the Presbyterian Missionary Society. It includes two dormitories, hospitals, a church, carpenter and shoemaker's shops, a bakery, and a cooper's establishment. The school has an average enrolment of one hundred and fifty, the pupils' ages ranging from four to twenty-one years. The course of study covers the regular grammar-school work. In the Industrial department, the girls are taught general housework, washing, ironing, sewing, and cooking. Some of the girls show considerable skill with the needle, and might become excellent seamstresses. Many find good homes among the white residents of the town as domestics.

The boys learn carpentry, coopering, shoemaking, gardening, and other useful trades. All the shoes worn by the mission scholars are made in their own shops. The new church was built by the boys, under the supervision of their teacher, Mr. Shields.

Among the graduates of the Training School, one man holds a position of trust in the store of the Sitka Trading Company; a second is foreman in a sawmill; a third has a shoemaking shop of his own; still another draws a salary of ten dollars a month as policeman, and occupies his spare time making jewelry to sell to tourists. Government officials have been greatly aided in their efforts to keep order by these native policemen. Proud of the distinction of authority, they are tireless in hunting out and destroying hoochinoo stills, closing dance-houses, arresting drunken marauders, and reporting breaches of the peace.

The Sitka mission has a strong hold upon the natives in their love of music. Two evenings in the week are given over to vocal drill; and the brass band has been a real means of grace, not only to its twenty-two members, but to a large number of enthusiastic listeners. It compares very favorably with the average village organization, gives serenades to arriving and departing officials, bids tuneful farewell to outgoing steamers, and helps wonderfully in celebrating national holidays.

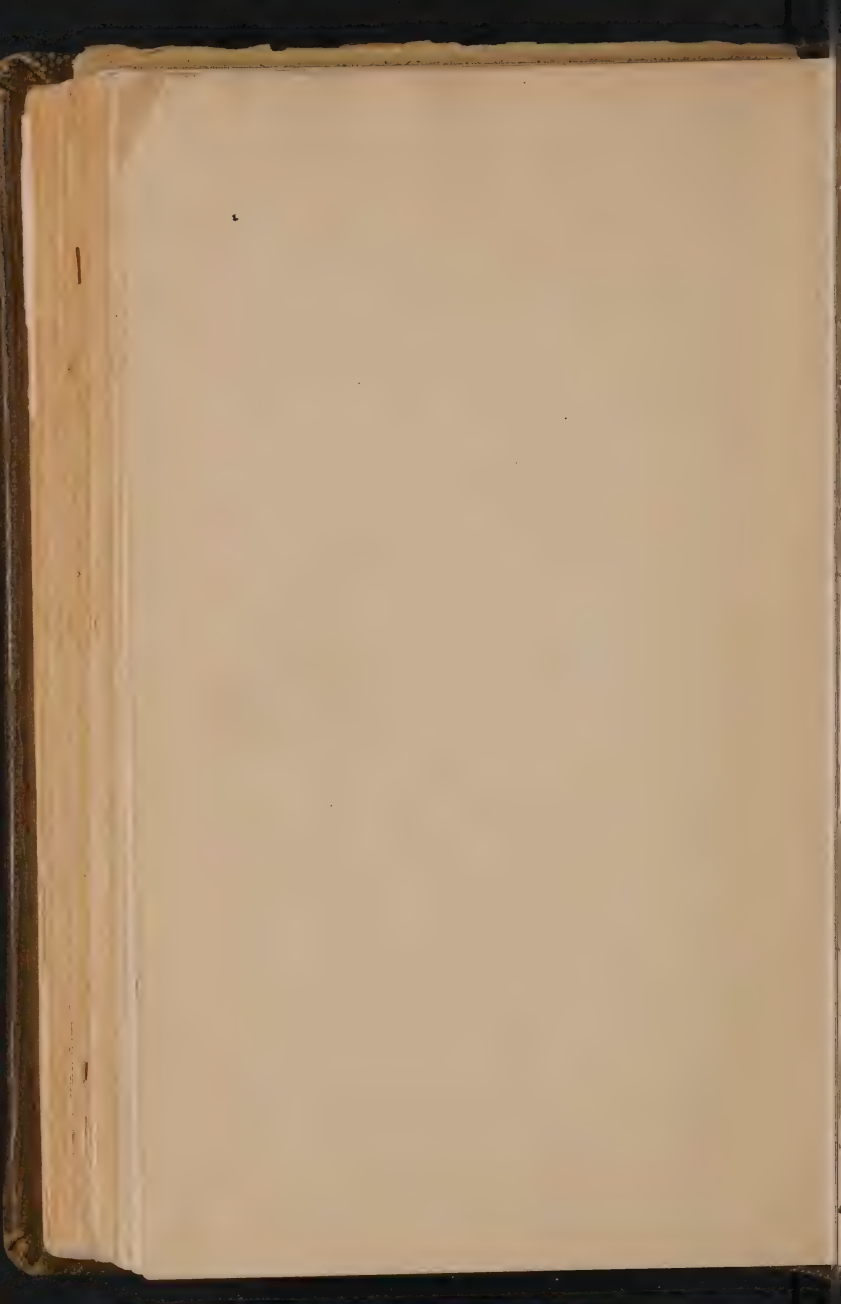
The most hopeful experiments yet tried are the eight little cottages built with money raised in the eastern States, mostly at different schools and colleges. One is called the New York cottage; another Bryn Mawr; others Northfield, Wellesley, etc.

The grown-up boys and girls of the mission are encouraged by their teachers to marry and go to housekeeping as soon as they leave school. In these new cottages eight young couples are making themselves happy homes, their monthly rental applying on the purchase of the house. They are pathetically contented and uplifted by their independence, and the spectacle of their well-doing cannot fail to have its influence on other young people. We call to mind a girl who was in service at an American residence. She was altogether inefficient, stubborn, and unreliable, subject to fits of sullenness and temper which lasted for days at a time. She left the house, and soon afterwards married. A year or two later, her former mistress met her on the street, walking with her husband, who carried a fat good-natured baby. The girl's face was transfigured; all the hard obstinacy was gone, and her eyes fairly shone with womanly pride and happiness as she described her little cottage on the Indian River road, whither they were walking.

This is the bright side of the picture.

If, by interesting the reader in these remote people, we should be the means of helping the picture to become brighter still, we shall be indeed gratified.

THE END.



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